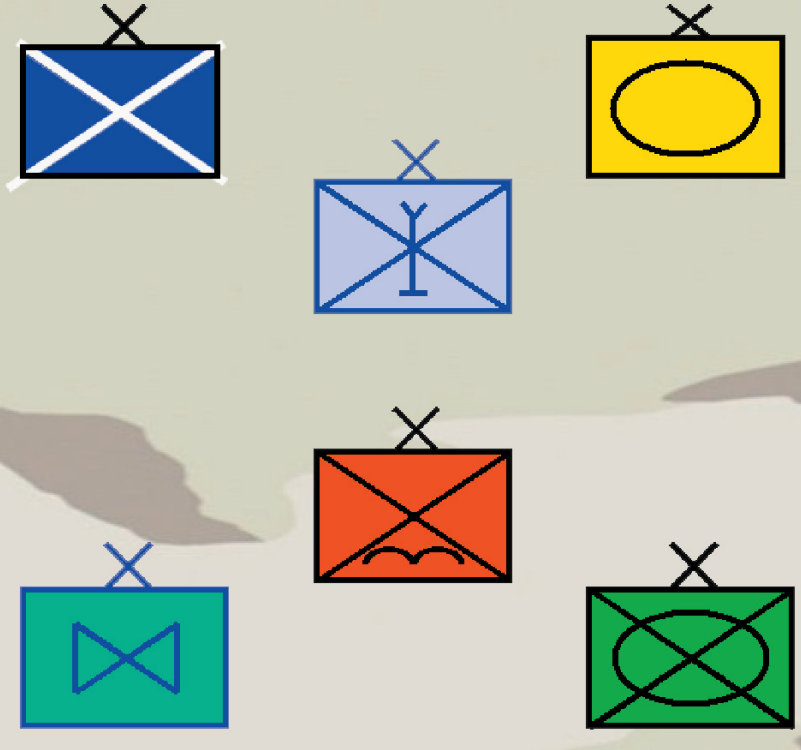
The Brigade: A History

Its Organization and Employment in the US Army

John J. McGrath



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John McGrath

Boston native John McGrath has worked for the US Army in one capacity or another since 1978. A retired Army Reserve officer, Mr. McGrath served in infantry, field artillery and logistics units, both on active duty and as a reservist. Before coming to work at the Combat Studies Institute, he worked for 4 years at the US Army Center of Military History in Washington, DC, as a historian and archivist. Prior to that, Mr. McGrath worked fulltime for the US Army Reserve in Massachusetts for over 15 years, both as an active duty reservist and as a civilian military technician. He also served as a mobilized reservist in 1991 in Saudi Arabia with the 22d Support Command during Operation DESERT STORM as the command historian and in 1992 at the US Army Center of Military History as a researcher/writer. Mr. McGrath is a graduate of Boston College and holds an MA in history from the University of Massachusetts at Boston. He is the author of numerous articles and military history publications and the book *Theater Logistics in the Gulf War*, published by the Army Materiel Command in 1994. Aside from a general interest in things military and historical, his areas of particular interest include modern military operations, the German army in World War II, August 1914, and the Union Army in the Civil War. He also has a keen interest in ancient history, historical linguistics, the city of Boston, and baseball.

FOREWORD

This is a timely work as virtually all current Army transformation initiatives focus in on the maneuver brigade as the key element in future reorganization. New initiatives centered on the Unit of Action (UA) concept utilize variations of the basic brigade design currently fielded in the Army for revamped organizations using projected or recently fielded technology. A study illustrating from where the brigade has come to assume such an important role in Army planning and organization is, therefore, very appropriate. This volume in the Combat Studies Institute Special Studies series additionally fills a void in the historiography of the US Army, illustrating the brigade level of command, both in organizational structure and in battlefield employment.

The brigade has been a key component of American Armies since the establishment of the first brigade of colonial militia volunteers under the command of George Washington in 1758. Brigades were key combined arms organizations in the Continental Army and were basic components of both the Confederate and Union forces in the Civil War, and have been the backbone of Army forces in Vietnam, the winning of the Cold War, DESERT STORM, and in the recent War in Iraq.

The force structure of the US Army has always been a target of tinkering and major readjustments since the short-lived experimentation with the Legion of the United States in 1792-1996. Nowhere is this more apparent than at the level of the brigade. For most of the history of the Army, the brigade was a temporary wartime expedient organization and the first level of command led by a general officer. In the 20th century, it was the basic tactical unit of trench warfare in World War I. However, in World War II it basically disappeared, though organizations such as the armored division's combat command, retained the spirit, if not the name of the organization. Following the late 1950s Pentomic period, the brigade returned in 1963 in a flexible structure very similar to that of the former combat command. As a mission-oriented, task-organized, combat organization, the maneuver brigade has survived the many vicissitudes of Army reorganization.

This work provides an organizational history of the maneuver brigade and case studies of its employment throughout the various wars. Apart from the text, the appendices at the end of the work provide a ready reference to all brigade organizations used in the Army since 1917 and the history of the brigade colors.

Lawyn C. Edwards
COL, AV
Director, Combat Studies

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was a work of love. A love for the US Army, its combat organizations, and its organizational and operational history. While I, as the author, take credit for any factual errors, a cast of many are responsible for the completion of this work and its associated research.

Among my colleagues at the Combat Studies Institute (CSI), Kendall Gott stands out as the individual who bird-dogged me onto this project on my very first day on the job. Ken has provided valuable insight and advise on a daily basis ever since. We share a certain insight despite my being an Eastern suburbanite, while he is a Midwestern small-town guy. Robin Kern, the CSI editor and layout wizard, responsible for this project provided its final look and had to deal with the over 66 tables, maps, pictures, and graphics that bring the story of the US Army brigade to life. Robin is now ready to edit for Marvel Comics! Other section colleagues who provided valuable insights, comments, and support include historians Dr. Lawrence Yates and Dr. Gary Bjorge, and editors Phil Davis and Patricia Whitten. Other colleagues in the various sections of CSI were very helpful but are too numerous to cite here.

I must also acknowledge the support of three key members of the CSI team, Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Farrell, former Chief Research and Publication Team; Dr. William G. Robertson, TRADOC Chief of Staff Rides and CAC Command Historian; and Colonel Lawyn C. Edwards, Director Combat Studies, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. These three not only hired me from halfway across the country, but were instrumental in supporting this project from start to finish. Lieutenant Colonel Farrell nurtured the project, but was transferred before seeing the end product. Dr. Robertson was the thought behind the project in the first place. With the development of the brigade-based Army in 2003-2004, his insight seemed very timely indeed. Colonel Edwards provided valuable insights to the project in various stages of development and provided continual key support which has ensured its completion.

Research and publication assistance was done by many. Among those who stand out include Ed Burgess, Director of the Combined Arms Research Library (CARL), who assisted me either directly or through his subordinates, in the use of his excellent facility, and Alice King, Copyright Clerk, who processed all the copyrights necessary for this work. Retired Colonel Greg Fontenot and his team of researchers assisted greatly by providing materials from his *On Point* project. Off-site support was plentiful. Of those that stand out are many of my former colleagues at the US Army Center of Military History (CMH) at Fort McNair in Washington, DC., including the Chief of Military History, Brigadier General John S. Brown, and the members of the CMH's Force Structure and Unit History Branch, who will probably cringe at some of the unofficial usages of unit organization found in this work. Ned Bedessem and Steve Everett of that branch were particularly helpful on various segments of unit organization research. Finally the guys who invented the Google website need to be mentioned. Without them much research leads on the Internet would be impossible to locate.

Further acknowledgements need to go to several former colleagues: my mentor as an Army historian, Dr. Robert K. Wright, Jr., who is now enjoying a well-deserved retirement in Florida and my oldest friend and colleague in Army history, Dr. Mark Sherry, both of whom advised me and read portions of the work. A third person at CMH who needs mentioning is editor and

fellow Bostonian Joanne Brignolo, who has provided constant professional support and advice on this project. My three children faraway in Massachusetts, Andrew, William, and Barbara, will finally know what exactly their father does in Kansas with this publication.

Hopefully this work, in some small way, will help support the soldiers and officers of the US Army worldwide who, as this work goes to press, are still vigorously pursuing victory in the Global War on Terrorism which began on 11 September 2001. This work is dedicated to these soldiers and to all those who will not be coming home.

John J. McGrath
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
15 June 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

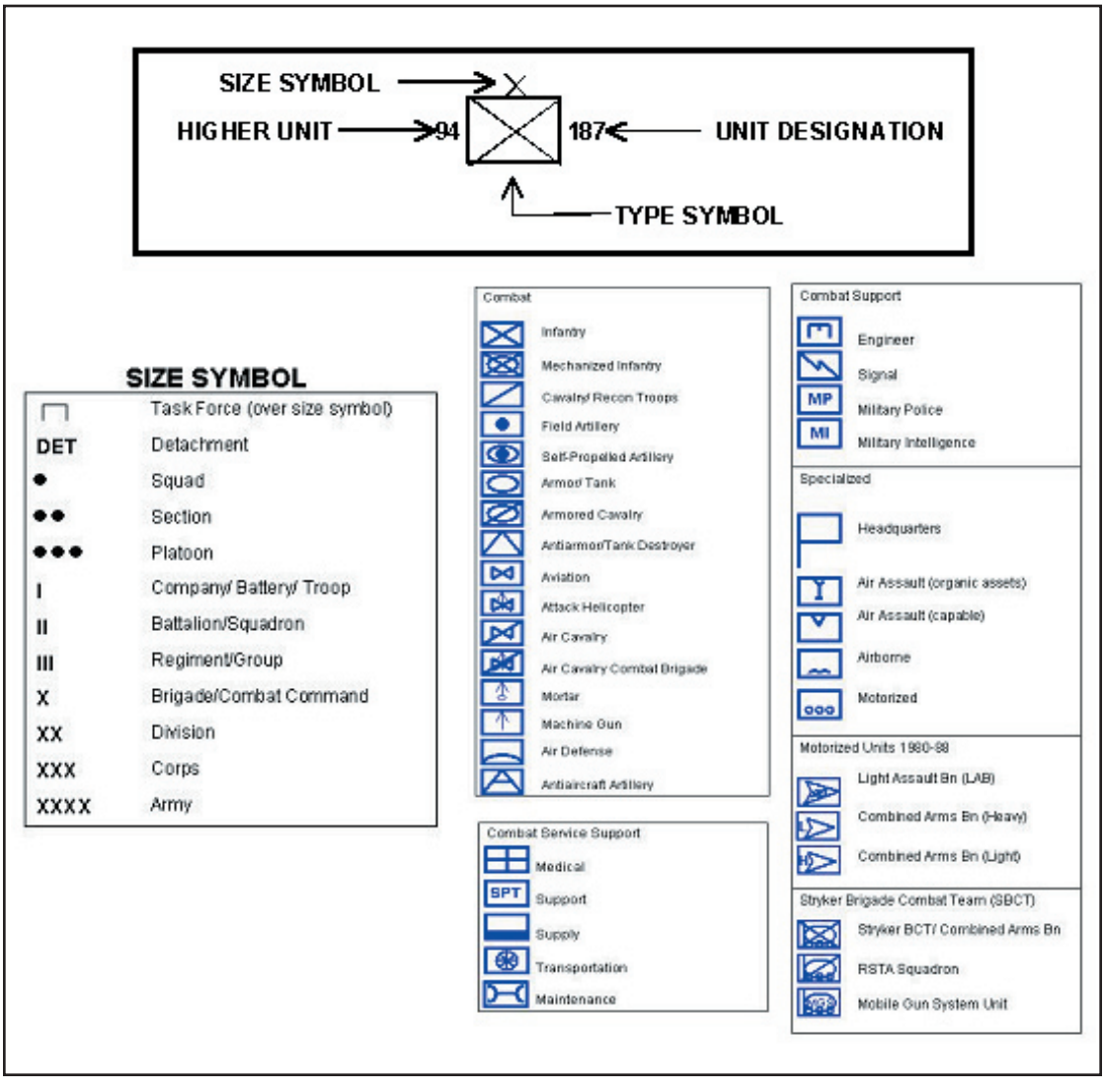
FIGURES

Page

TABLES

Page

MAP SYMBOLS KEY



INTRODUCTION

On 12 August 1999, US Army Chief of Staff, General Eric K. Shinseki, announced the commencement of Army force development initiatives designed to transform the Army into a force that would be "more responsive, lethal, agile, versatile, survivable, and sustainable to meet the needs of the nation."[1] Shinseki proposed to effect this transformation by creating two, later six, "technology-enhanced, fast-deployable, and lethal brigades."[2] These brigades, initially coined as Interim Brigade Combat Teams (IBCT), because they would be outfitted with available equipment on an interim basis, showed a subtle shift in US Army force development focus from the division to the brigade. This shift was also reflected in the force structure of the US Army in 2003. In the mid-1990s, the Army, reduced in size after the end of the Cold War, fielded the 10-Division Force structure. After redesignations and unit shifts, there were no nondivisional maneuver brigades in this force structure.[3] However, this lack of separate brigades was deceptive. A closer examination revealed that, while the Army fielded 10 divisional headquarters in 1996, only three divisions had all three of their numbered maneuver brigades collocated with the division headquarters. Two installations, Fort Lewis, Washington, and Fort Riley, Kansas, fielded brigades from different divisions without a division headquarters located on post. In both cases, the respective division headquarters were located overseas. The 1st Brigade, 6th Infantry Division (ID), located in Alaska, was earmarked to act as the third brigade of the two-brigade 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, New York. Each divisional brigade located away from its parent division, included the standardized slice of divisional combat support and combat service support units. This complete package, referred to as a brigade combat team (BCT), is essentially a unit able to operate separately from the division, much like the separate brigades were organizationally designed to so operate.[4]

The years after 1996 saw further shifts toward a brigade force when two new separate brigade headquarters were activated, the 172d Infantry in Alaska replacing the 1st Brigade of the previously inactivated 6th Infantry Division, and the 173d Airborne in Italy, and the reactivation of two division headquarters, the 7th Infantry and 24th Infantry (Mechanized), that had no troops of their own, but were responsible for three separate Army National Guard (ARNG) brigades, none of which were located near their respective division headquarters at Fort Carson, Colorado, and Fort Riley. Shinseki's emphasis on the brigade as the level of command to field his new combat teams, in this context, is, therefore, not very surprising.

The brigade, either as part of a division or as an independent or separate entity, is the major tactical headquarters controlling battalions in maneuver combat arms; armor and infantry. The modern maneuver brigade is a flexible organization designed to be task organized for specific combat missions.[5] When operating independently, the brigade is usually the lowest level of command led by a general officer. With organic elements, in the case of the separate brigade, or with attached elements from the division, in the case of the divisional brigade, it is the smallest combined arms unit in the US Amy capable of independent operations.

In current US Army organizational structure, the divisional brigade is the only unit below corps level without a fixed organization.[6] While companies, battalions, and divisions all have organic assigned units, except for a small reconnaissance troop and a headquarters company, the brigade has no assigned troops. Instead it is given a mix of combat battalions from those

assigned to the division to complete specific missions. Additionally, in recent years brigades have also received slices of combat support and combat service support units from the division, as well as combat battalions. In this case, the brigade is usually referred to as a BCT.

This work studies the evolution, organizational structure, and employment of the maneuver brigade. In passing, it will also discuss other army brigades, such as those consisting of field artillery, aviation, and engineer units, not usually used in a maneuver role.

As an organization, the brigade has a long history in the US Army going back to the very first organization, the Continental Army. General George Washington established the first brigades on 22 July 1775.[7] The term *brigade* itself first entered the English language, like most military terms, from the French language. The word is first attested in the 15th century as a term for a larger military unit than the squadron or regiment and was first adopted when English armies began to consist of formations larger than a single regiment. The term's origin is found in two French roots, which together meant roughly "those who fight."[8] It is totally fitting that the brigade be designated as "those who fight" because the organization has, throughout most of its existence in the US Army, been a purely tactical, or combat, organization, and currently is where the combat power of the US Army is found.

At the start of the 21st century, debates on the future of warfare and the transformation of the US Army to adjust to this future environment are ongoing. The brigade is usually at the center of transformational organizational structures, either as a replacement for the division as the basic building block for projecting combat power or as the Unit of Action (UA), a flexible organization designed to fight and win battles. While debates and final decisions on this structure are ongoing as of the publication of this work, it is vital that planners understand the history and theory behind the evolution of the US Army maneuver brigade.

This special study outlines and illuminates the history and evolution of the brigade as an organization in the US Army, from the earliest days to the current era. The work follows both the organizational structure and how it was actually employed on the battlefield.

NOTES

1. Gerry J. Gilmore, "Army TO Develop Future Force, says Shinseki." *Army Link News*, 13 October 1999, <http://www.dtic/mil/armylink/news/Oct1999/a19991013shinvis.html>.
2. Ibid.
3. The 10-division force consisted of the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, and 25th Infantry Divisions, 10th Mountain Division, 1st Armored Division, 1st Cavalry Division, and the 82d and 101st Airborne Divisions. "Army Announces Divisions to Remain in the 10-Division Force." DOD New Release Reference Number 067-95, 10 February 1995, <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Feb1995/b021095_bt067-95.html>.
4. A typical brigade slice included a direct support field artillery battalion, a combat engineer battalion, an air defense artillery battery, a forward support battalion, which was already structured to support the specific brigade, and military intelligence and signal companies.
5. Aviation brigades, now organic to all types of army divisions, are considered to be maneuver brigades as well. Often such brigades are referred to informally, and incorrectly, as the 4th Brigade of their respective division. This will be discussed in detail later in this work.
6. See the Conclusion for a discussion of the future projected brigade organization (Unit of Action or UA) in which the brigade would have a modular organization with assets currently found at division assigned directly to the brigade.
7. John B. Wilson, *Maneuver and Firepower: The Evolution of Divisions and Separate Brigades.* Army Lineage Series (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1998), 3.
8. The roots are the French verb *brigare*, meaning "to brawl" or "fight," which was in turn from the late Latin word *briga*, which meant "strife" or "contention," and the suffix *–ade*, which was a French adaptation of a suffix found in various other Romance languages, such as Provençal, which came from a form of the Latin past participle. In French the suffix came to have the meaning "the body concerned in an action or process." Therefore, the original meaning of the term brigade would be something like "the body concerned with brawling or fighting." J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) Vol. I, 148 and Vol. II, 548.

Chapter 1

BRIGADES IN THE CONTINENTAL ARMY

Colonial Background

The brigade as a military organization came about starting in the 15th century when the British army and militia developed a unit to control more than one infantry regiment or cavalry squadron.[1] Brigades were traditionally only temporary units organized when necessary, a status generally maintained in the US armed forces until early in the 20th century. In the New World, where the militia was the only permanent military organization, the separate colonies established different, but similar, systems of organization. In New England, for example, each town had its own militia company or trainband. Above the town level, each county had a militia regiment to control the companies assembled in each of the towns in the county. At the colonial level, there was one general officer who commanded all the colony's militia. This officer was usually called the sergeant major-general, later shortened to major-general.[2] In some colonies, the rank was lieutenant-general or even simply general. In Virginia, the colony was divided into districts. A major-general headed each district, with a major-general of the colony as the ranking officer.[3]

The colonies had little use for brigades. Rarely did a single whole regiment, let alone several, assemble to conduct military operations. When larger expeditions were necessary, special volunteer or militia companies were raised by quota from each town within the colony. On the rare occasions these forces proved to be larger than regimental strength, brigades were not organized. For example, the large expedition against the Narragansett Indians in 1675 consisted of troops from the colonies of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, and Connecticut. The forces were organized into specially raised contingents from each colony, each styled a regiment, but the force as a whole was considered an expedition, not a brigade. The command was referred to simply as "the army." The Army's commander, Josiah Winslow, aside from being the governor of Plymouth colony, was also given the title of general and commander in chief of the expedition. No other officer in the expedition ranked higher than major.[4]

The situation was the same 70 years later when the colonials launched their largest expedition ever, the successful attack and seizure of the French fortress of Louisbourg, on Cape Breton Island, off Nova Scotia. Despite the raising of a relatively large army, the senior officer, General William Pepperrell, and his assistant, Major-General Roger Wolcott, were the only generals in an army of over 10 regiments.[5] The force was not subdivided into brigades, though specific missions were often delegated to regimental commanders or to Wolcott.[6]

Brigades and brigadier-generals did not appear in North America until the Seven Years War, when the British government first sent large continents of regular troops to secure its American colonies. The British regular army of the colonial era, like the militia, had no permanent organization larger than regiment, and created brigades only when necessary to control a force of more than three regiments. Pitched battles in Europe had, however, given the British experience with larger units. Brigadier-generals first appear on the continent along with the brigades they commanded.[7] In the British service, brigadier-general was an appointment given to a senior colonel or lieutenant colonel, who was in command of more than one regiment;

in other words, a brigade. The appointment lasted only as long as the officer was in command. Accordingly, the rank of major-general was the first substantive, or permanent, rank of general officer in the British army. The British force sent to take Louisbourg in 1757 consisted of 13 regular regiments. Most regiments had only a single battalion, though two had two battalions. These regiments were divided into three brigades of five battalions each, with each brigade headed by an officer appointed as brigadier-general (for service in North America only). The Army commander designated the brigades by their intended employment as left, centre, and right.[8]

The first brigade of colonial troops also appeared in 1758 in Brigadier-General John Forbes' expedition against Fort Duquesne, Pennsylvania. In his final approach to the French fortress, Forbes organized his command into three brigades. Colonel George Washington, 1st Virginia, commanded one of these, consisting of the 1st and 2d Virginia Regiments. The two Virginia regiments had been raised as special militia units specifically for participating in the Forbes expedition. After the successful seizure of Fort Duquesne, the brigade was discontinued, Washington resigned his commission and the 2d Virginia was disbanded.[9]

Washington and the Brigade

In April and June 1775, after the initial skirmishes between the New England militia and British regular forces near Boston, Massachusetts, and Fort Ticonderoga, New York, the Continental Congress determined to field a force representing all the colonies and run according to its wishes. By unanimous vote, Congress appointed Washington, the only colonial with experience as a brigade commander as general and commander in chief of this new Continental Army on 15 June 1775.

When Washington was appointed, militia forces from the New England colonies had the British garrison in Boston under siege. These forces, organized by state in a very decentralized manner, had just fought the Battle of Bunker Hill. Washington arrived and immediately set out to create order and organization, using his experience of units above regiment level as a guide. He promptly created the first brigades and divisions in US Army history. Initially, the number of brigades was determined by the number of brigadier-generals appointed. An extra brigade was created and temporarily commanded by its senior colonel, as Congress needed to fill one brigadier-general vacancy. Congress had created the first brigadier-generals and major-generals on 22 June. Unlike in the British service, the rank of brigadier-general was a substantive one in the new Army.[10]

Both brigades and divisions were at the start administrative and geographical subdivisions of the Army. Washington divided the siege lines around Boston into divisional and brigade sectors. One division was in reserve. Each of the three divisions consisted of two brigades. Brigades consisted of either six or seven regiments. Only Massachusetts fielded enough total regiments to have brigades formed entirely of troops just from that colony. Regiments from Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, along with small contingents from Virginia and Maryland, were brigaded with Massachusetts units. Brigade strengths fluctuated, with an average size of 2,600 soldiers.[11] Using this organization, Washington successfully completed the siege, which climaxed in the British evacuation of Boston on 17 March 1776.

Following British practice, brigades were initially considered purely tactical units of a temporary nature and accordingly assigned virtually no staff. Originally the regiment was to be the Army's basic administrative and tactical unit. But Washington soon realized the nature of the command precluded this. Troops were recruited from up to 13 different colonies for short-term enlistments. Regiments from different states often had different organizational structures and sizes. Therefore, regiments were often fleeting organizations whose strengths went up and down, mostly down, as time passed. As a result, in practice, the brigade soon replaced the regiment as the Army's basic tactical and administrative unit. Brigades were commanded by brigadier-generals appointed directly by Congress, whose candidacies were usually based on Washington's recommendation. In contrast, regimental colonels were usually appointed by their respective colonial governors or legislatures. By shuffling regiments, Washington and other independent commanders could keep brigade sizes equal, rather than allowing them to wither away, as did some regiments. This allowed for a certain standard flexibility to maneuver forces both on the battlefield and at the operational level. The brigade even assumed a certain standard size. The brigades at Boston had been relatively large. Later in the war at Trenton, New Jersey, in December 1776 and Monmouth, New Jersey, in June 1778, they averaged 1,400 soldiers, while at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781, brigade strength averaged around 1,000.[12]

The increased importance of the brigade as the unit of stability in the Army led to a gradual increase in its staff and its role in logistics and administration. Initially the brigade staff consisted of a sole junior officer, the brigade major. The brigade major was a position inherited from British tradition. Like the British brigadier-general, the rank was originally only by position being filled by a regimental captain. In the American service, the position became substantive, with the officer being given the rank of major on the staff. The brigade major was a combination adjutant, (i.e., administrator) and aide de camp (messenger and general assistant) to the brigade commander. By 1779, two officers supplanted the brigade major with the titles of aide de camp and brigade inspector. At the same time, two more staff officers were added to the brigade headquarters: a brigade quartermaster, to manage the brigade's supplies, and a brigade conductor of military stores, to manage the brigade's ammunition supply and maintain its weapons.[13]

After the evacuation of Boston, the war became decidedly more mobile. In the New York-New Jersey campaign of 1776, Washington had to be flexible enough to thwart incessant outflanking maneuvers, a favorite tactic of British commander General William Howe, while at the same time having his troops spread out far enough to respond to and assemble on any advancing enemy force. For this type of warfare, Washington depended on the brigade and his corps of brigadier-general brigade commanders as his essential elements. Washington did not command brigades directly, but used his major-generals to command divisions, which controlled the brigades directly. After Boston, most division commanders controlled three brigades, but this could be changed or adjusted based on circumstances. Washington's optimum brigade organization was for a brigade to control three regiments of 700 men each, with three brigades forming a division. Both brigades and divisions would be commanded by general officers and be capable of operating in conjunction with each other or separately. While obtaining the ideal strength and organizational structure was mostly out of his hands, Washington clearly was able to organize his army to fight together or separately. The brigade was the basic unit Washington used to accomplish this.[14]

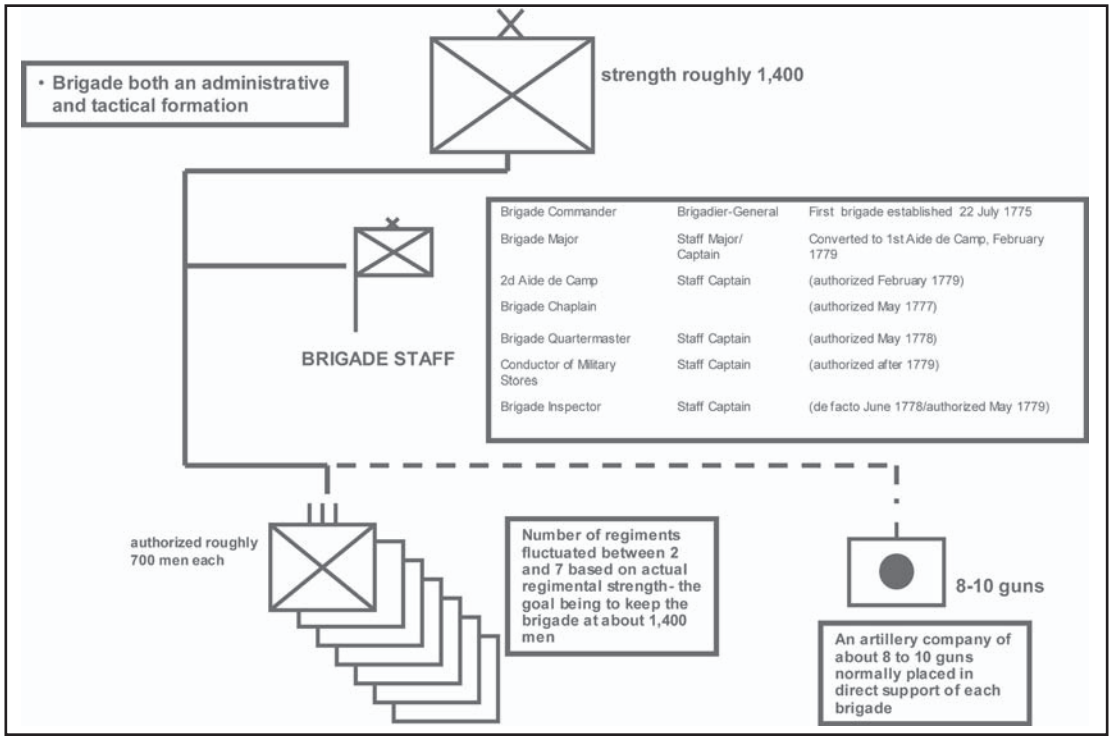


Figure 1. Continental Army Brigade, 1775-1783

Following the setbacks in New York and New Jersey in 1776, Washington decided to strike back at the strung out British forces in central Jersey. Accordingly, on 25 December 1776, he moved to use his whole army in one stroke to destroy the Hessian mercenary forces garrisoning Trenton and threaten the remaining British forces in New Jersey. Minus a diversionary force and a force designated to seal the Hessian route of retreat, Washington had at his direct disposal an attack group consisting of two divisions, each with three brigades, and a separate brigade acting as the advance guard. In a move of great innovation, he had Colonel Henry Knox's artillery distributed among the brigades to provide direct support, thus creating the first combined arms units in US Army history. With these forces, he crossed the Delaware River and advanced on Trenton from the north in two divisional columns, the left commanded by very capable Major-General Nathaniel Greene, the right by the experienced Major-General John Sullivan. Coordination between the columns worked perfectly so that both elements were in position and able to work in unison. The direct support of the artillery and the placement of brigades had the Hessians virtually surrounded before the battle even began. When they tried to attack one of Greene's brigades, commanded by Brigadier-General William Alexander, Lord Stirling, whose attached artillery was pouring fire onto their right flank, they were stopped by massed fire from one of Sullivan's brigades, commanded by Brigadier-General Hugh Mercer, firing into their left flank. After an abortive retreat in which their brigade commander was killed, the Hessians surrendered. The use of combined arms and the maneuvering of brigade-sized forces had won the first battlefield victory in US Army history. A week later, Washington repeated the performance at Princeton, New Jersey, where he outmaneuvered the British relief force. Once again Washington managed to mass

his forces at one place by maneuvering and assembling brigades and artillery. The British rear guard was chewed up, resulting in their virtual evacuation of New Jersey for the winter.[15]

After Trenton, Washington formally organized his brigades as combined arms teams and perfected his operational concept for using them in both offensive and defensive operations. An artillery company of between eight and 10 guns was usually placed in direct support of each infantry brigade.[16] On the defensive, brigades were to be deployed within mutually supporting distance of each other. If one were attacked, it was to fix the attackers and then the other brigades in the division, followed by the closest divisions, would advance to mass on the attackers and hopefully double envelope and crush them. Even with this relatively simple doctrine and honed organizational structure, there were teething problems in executing it, especially against the professional soldiers of King George III. This was particularly evident at Brandywine, in September 1777. There Howe, advancing from Chesapeake to Philadelphia, planned to duplicate his flanking maneuver which had been so successful a year before at the Battle of Long Island. Intelligence failures, coupled with a poorly covered right flank, allowed the British to advance deep into the right rear of the American position before they were discovered. Flexibility of organization and Howe's penchant for battlefield pauses allowed Washington to reconfigure his command on the fly and meet Howe's force with seven small brigades under Sullivan, Alexander, and Major-General Adam Stephen. Amid furious fighting, the British overwhelmed the American line, forcing Washington to rush Greene's two brigades from his left flank by forced march 4 miles in 45 minutes to reinforce the position. While this maneuver worked, the force Howe left behind now attacked the weakened left, forcing the Americans to retreat to avoid being crushed between the two British forces.

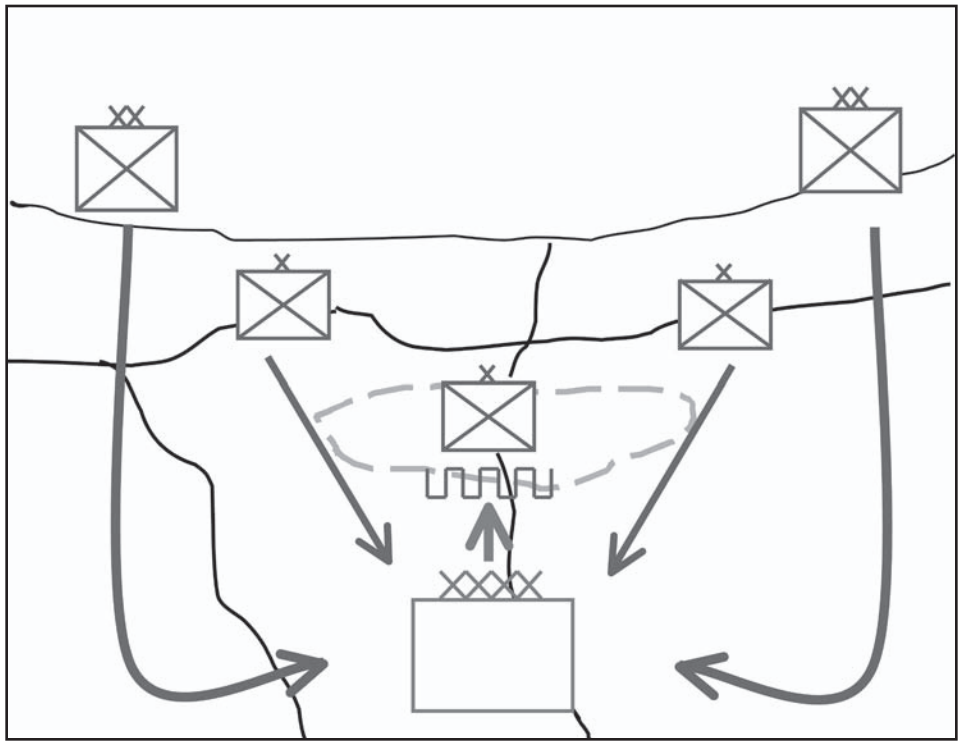


Figure 2. Washington's Defensive Concept for the Employment of the Brigade

Things worked much more effectively in 1780, when the British sortied out of their Manhattan defensive enclave twice near Springfield, New Jersey. Washington's defensive doctrine had reached its apex in the defensive lines covering the British garrison in New York after General Henry Clinton, Howe's replacement, retreated back there from Philadelphia in 1778. Washington encircled the city with brigades posted on high ground with clear observation, out of naval bombardment range and, to provide warning time, about a day's march from the nearest British outposts. Brigades were positioned to be able to easily support each other. Carefully constructed lateral communications allowed for the easy moving of large formations to threatened sectors. The brigade at the focus of the enemy attack was to fix the attackers in place. All other brigades and divisions were to fall in to mass against the attacking force and hopefully double envelope and crush it.[17]

The strength of the American defenses was not lost on Clinton, who chose to pursue campaigns in the southern states, far from Washington, rather than test them.[18] The two exceptions were the twin sorties conducted in June 1780 near Springfield. In both cases, the British forces were soundly beaten and forced to beat hasty retreats to positions where the Royal Navy's guns could protect them. The memory of Springfield so hung with British commander Clinton, that 13 months later when Washington left a skeleton force of 2,500 men behind to watch New York while he marched with the rest of the army to Yorktown, Clinton stayed on the defensive. He did not move to interfere with the American redeployment until it was too late to do anything about it.

Washington's concept was designed to work on the offense, as well as the defense. After Brandywine, the only offensive actions Washington was able to mount were at Germantown, Pennsylvania, in October 1777, and at Monmouth in June 1778. In both cases, the British prevailed after a hard fight, due to American mistakes, simple bad luck, and poor synchronization. At Germantown, Washington attempted to repeat his success at Trenton on a larger scale, with multiple columns massing against the British right flank. Despite ground fog, which limited visibility and the diversion of a brigade to frontally assault the Chew House, an impromptu fortress in the center of the British line, the attack was succeeding. Brigadier-General Anthony Wayne's two brigades were successfully pushing back the British left, when another American division, under Stephen mistakenly came up into Wayne's rear, rather than that of the British, and fired into the backs of their fellow countrymen. In the resulting confusion, the British counterattacked and Washington's right withdrew in confusion. Greene's division, moving to the left of Stephen to encircle the British, was now out on a limb. Greene retreated to avoid encirclement, effectively ending the battle.

The Battle of Monmouth was Washington's last open battle offensive action of the war. In June 1778, British commander in chief Clinton decided to consolidate his forces at New York. Accordingly, he evacuated Philadelphia and proceeded to march across New Jersey for a rendezvous with fleet transports to ferry the army across New York Bay at Sandy Hook.

Washington was determined to attack Clinton while he was in the open and not protected by the Royal Navy and the natural defenses of New York City. Accordingly, he followed Clinton looking for an opening to attack part of the British force. Clinton's large baggage train meant his army was strung out for miles in the New Jersey countryside.

Washington, having decided to mass against the British rear guard under Lieutenant General Charles Cornwallis, divided his army into two wings, the advanced wing, initially under Major-General Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roche Gilbert du Motier, the Marquis de Lafayette, then under Major-General Charles Lee, and the main body under himself. Lee's command, with seven brigades, was ordered to attack the rearguard before they reached the safety of high ground just south of Sandy Hook, less than a day's march away.

Lee, an ex-British officer, shared many of the same low opinions of American fighting qualities that his former peers did despite glaring evidence to the contrary. His belief in the low quality of his troops made him a timid field commander and a poor choice to head up a mission requiring daring and aggressiveness. But, aside from Washington, Lee was the senior officer in the Army and he insisted on the command after Washington had initially given it to the much more optimistic and energetic Lafayette.

When the army got within striking distance of Clinton's rear guard, Washington ordered Lee to attack the next day. Instead of developing a plan for this, Lee told his subordinates to be prepared to receive orders on the battlefield. The next day, 28 June 1778, Lee advanced on Cornwallis' force just north of Monmouth Court House. Despite outnumbering the strung-out British more than two to one, the lack of an overall plan, and Lee's attempts to move units on the cuff resulted in great confusion, piecemeal attacks, and then retreat when the British counterattacked. Washington arrived on the scene and personally rallied Lee's command, organizing them to delay the now reinforced British until the rest of the army could form a defensive line. This worked and the American forces, now on the defensive, beat back the British attack. The American organizational structure's flexibility allowed quick recovery even from poor leadership above the brigade and division level. Lee was subsequently court-martialed and cashiered.

Brigades and Brigadier-Generals

While Washington reserved the right to move regiments around between brigades as he saw fit, he realized it was more practical to stabilize organizations as much as possible.[19] The Army was recruited by state quota, meaning each state was required to recruit a certain number of regiments or smaller units from its population, and, whenever possible, brigades were made up of regiments from the same state. While in reports brigades were usually referred to by their commander's name, later in the war most brigades were designated by state. States with large contingents had several brigades numbered consecutively, for example, the 2d Massachusetts Brigade. Such unique formal brigade designations would not return again to the US Army until World War I.

The number of operational brigades in the Continental Army fluctuated based on the need to counter British activities. Fortunately for Washington, during most of the war the British maintained only one active area of operations at any given time. An exception to this was the summer of 1777, were two major-operations, Howe's advance on Philadelphia and Lieutenant-General John Burgoyne's advance from Canada south along the Hudson Valley. To counter these twin thrusts, the number of active Continental Army brigades was increased to over 22 in the spring of 1777. This number stayed relatively constant, as indicated in Figure 2, until the loss of five entire brigades with the surrender of Charleston, South Carolina, in May 1780. These brigades, consisting of most of the Continental Army contingents from Virginia,

the Carolinas, and Georgia, were never replaced.[20] The total number of operational brigades remained between 10 and 15 for the rest of the war. After the victory at Yorktown, in late 1781, the Continental Army was mainly concerned with watching the British garrison in New York. With peace on the horizon, the Army was allowed to shrink as regiments were disbanded and returned home. The number of brigades, accordingly, also shrank throughout 1783 until the British finally evacuated the city, ending the need for the Army. Tied directly to the number of brigades was the number of brigadier-generals. Washington clearly saw this connection and thought it essential that brigade commanders be general officers.[21]

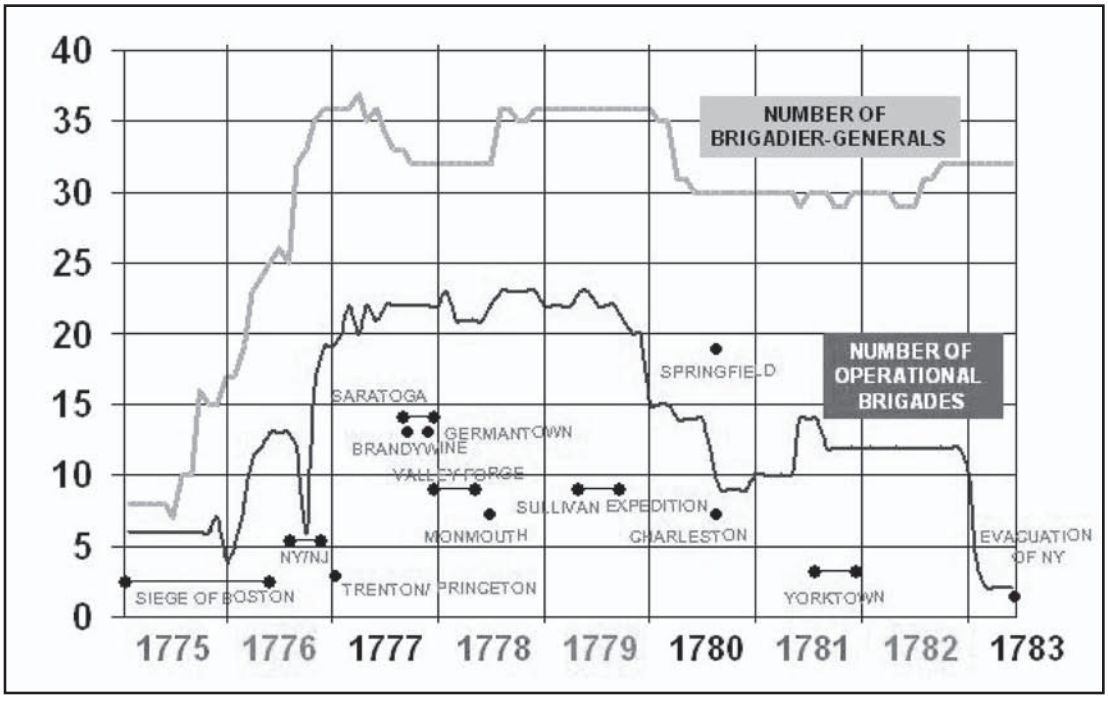


Figure 3. Number of Continental Army Brigades, 1775-1783

The Continental Army adopted the grade of brigadier-general from the British army. But, unlike the American use of the grade as a substantive rank, brigadier-general had developed in the British army as a positional grade much like the grade of commodore in the Royal Navy. In the Royal Navy, for most of its history, the rank of commodore was held by a senior captain who commanded more than just his own ship, in other words, a naval captain acting with the prerogatives of a flag officer, an admiral. The grade came with no additional pay, but the commodore was allowed to fly a flag, euphemistically referred to as a "broad pennant" from his own ship to indicate his position. Similarly, a British brigadier-general was a colonel or, more usually, a lieutenant-colonel, who commanded more than just his own regiment. As with commodore in the Royal Navy, the grade was temporary; only granted to the holder under specific conditions. In the British army, this often meant the grade was only active when the holder was serving in North America. The grade of brigadier-general, also called, almost interchangeably, brigadier, first appeared in the British army during the reign of King James II. A warrant of 1705 placed the grade directly below major-general, but the appointment was always considered temporary and not continuous. The British were ambiguous over whether

the holder was considered a general officer or a senior field grade officer. However, when the British adopted shoulder boards with rank insignia in 1880, the brigadier-general insignia included the crossed sword and baton worn by the other general grades. By uniform, in any event, a brigadier-general was considered the lowest grade of general. In 1920, the grade was abolished and two new substantive grades were created, that of colonel-commandant and colonel of the staff. In 1928, these two grades were merged into a new grade, brigadier, which still exists in the British army today. That this current grade of brigadier is considered the senior grade of field grade officer, rather than a general officer, is clearly indicated by its rank insignia, which is similar to a colonel's with an extra pip added.[22]

As with the Army as a whole, brigadier-generals were supposed to be tied to a quota based on the number of troops the respective state supplied. While the total number of brigadier-generals always exceeded the number of brigades by about 10 officers, the number in field command was often less. Some brigadiers were diverted to perform administrative duties. Others, with no retirement system in place, were still on the rolls though unfit for field duty. The number of brigadier-generals reached a high of 35 in 1778, and remained at or near this number for the rest of the war. Later in the war, Congress was stingy on promotion, only appointing new brigadiers to replace losses. As this also applied to major-generals as well, Wayne, promoted to brigadier-general in 1777, remained such for the rest of the war, despite his commanding a division at Brandywine, Germantown, and Monmouth. Because of seniority, Wayne often reverted back to brigade command long after he had shown his prowess at the higher echelon. Statistics for brigadier-generals during the war are as follows:

Table 1. Number of Brigadier-Generals, 1775-1783

Year	Appointed	Promoted	KIA	Other Deaths	Resigned	Total BGs EOY
1775	9	1	0	0	1	7
1776	26	6	0	1	1	25
1777	22	8	4	0	2	33
1778	0	0	0	0	2	31
1779	5	0	0	0	1	35
1780	1	2	0	2	2	30
1781	0	1	0	1	0	28
1782	1	2	0	0	0	27
1783	3	0	0	0	0	30
Total	67	20	4	4	9	

Washington employed brigades much as Napoleon Bonaparte would use the army corps 20 years later to revolutionize European warfare, "capable of independent action, but primarily . . . to be an interchangeable part in the big picture."[23] He tried to keep brigades at equal sizes and use them as standardized units commanded by experienced general officers to execute what would otherwise be hopelessly complex battle drills. "In short, each brigade should be an epitome of the great whole, and move by similar springs, upon a smaller scale."[24] The US Army would not again see the brigade play such a prominent role in its operational doctrine for almost 200 years.

NOTES

1. J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) Vol. I, 148 and Vol. II, 548.
2. Jack S. Radabaugh, "The Militia of Colonial Massachusetts," *Military Affairs* 18 (Spring 1954), 2-5.
3. Frederick S. Aldridge, *Organization and Administration of the Militia System of Colonial Virginia,* Ph.D. diss. American University 1964, 25, 62, 64.
4. George M. Bodge, *Brief History of King Philip's War* (Boston: Printed Privately, 1891), 182-83.
5. The 4,000-man force raised by Massachusetts Bay Governor William Shirley included eight regiments from Massachusetts, including the district of Maine, one each from Connecticut and New Hampshire, and three companies from Rhode Island. William Pepperrell, as a colonel, had been the militia commander for the portion of the Massachusetts militia from Maine. See the Canadian Parks Service Louisbourg website: <http://www.louisbourg.ca/fort/siege1745.htm>, accessed 1 May 2003.
6. Douglas E. Leach, *Arms for Empire: A Military History of the British Colonies in North America, 1607-1763* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 236-41.
7. A more detailed discussion of the rank of brigadier-general, and the later rank of brigadier, can be found on pages 7 through 9. The grade in the British service was not substantive, being given to lieutenant-colonels and colonels only while they were in brigade command. (Ranks were hyphenated until after the Civil War.)
8. The officers were Lieutenant-Colonel James Wolfe, 20th Regiment of Foot; Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Lawrence, 40th Regiment of Foot and governor of Nova Scotia; and Colonel Edward Whitmore, 22d Regiment of Foot. <http://www.militaryheritage.com/40th.htm>, accessed 1 May 2003; J.W. Fortesque, *A History of the British Army*, Vol. II (London: MacMillan, 1910), 322. In the British service, the regiment was the administrative unit, the battalion the tactical unit. Some regiments had more than one battalion but they always fought separately, even when part of the same army. With a few unique exceptions, the US Army would also retain single battalion regiments until the 1890s.
9. Walter O'Meara, *Guns at the Forks* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 208; Douglas Leach, *Arms for Empire,* 443; James P. Myers, Jr., "General Forbes Roads to War," *Military History* 18:5 (December 2001), 30-36. Forbes' substantive rank was colonel, 17th Regiment of Foot. The other two brigades were commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Bouquet, 1st Battalion, 60th Regiment of Foot, and Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Montgomery, 77th Highland Regiment of Foot.
10. Robert Wright, *The Continental Army*, 26, 29; *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, 34 Vols., Worthington C. Ford, ed. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office (GPO), 1904-1937), Vol. 2, 93-94 (hereafter cited as *JCC*).
11. Brendan Morrissey, *Boston 1775: The Shot Heard Around the World*. Osprey Campaign Series Number 37. (Osprey: London, 1993), 75-76; John B. Wilson, *Maneuver and Firepower: The Evolution of Divisions and Separate Brigades.* Army Lineage Series (Washington, DC: GPO, 1998), 3.
12. Wright, 25; Wilson, 3.
13. Wilson, 4-5.
14. Wright, 98, 152; E-mail from Dr. Robert Wright to author, 14 January 2003; Wilson, 5-6.
15. Craig L. Symonds. *A Battlefield Atlas of the American Revolution* (Baltimore, MD: Nautical and Aviation Publishing, 1986), 30-33.
16. Wright, 97-98.
17. Wright e-mail, 14 January 2003; Wright, 152.
18. Ibid. Clinton's comments can be found in his *Headquarters Intelligence Books*, archived at the New York Public Library.
19. *The Writings of George Washington*, Vol. VII 1778-1779, Worthington C. Ford, ed. (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1890), 60-61.
20. Brigades, which surrendered on 12 May 1780 at Charleston, included the 1st Virginia Brigade; the North Carolina Brigade; Armstrong's Brigade, of North Carolina troops; the South Carolina Brigade; and the Georgia Brigade.
21. *JCC*, 102, 315.
22. Wright, 26; *The Writings of George Washington*, Vol. 2, 93-94, 97; Commander (RN) W.E. May, W.Y. Carman and John Tanner, *Badges and Insignia of the British Armed Service* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), 141.
23. Wright e-mail, 14 January 2003; Wright, 152.
24. *The Writings of Washington*, 315.

Chapter 2

THE BRIGADE FROM 1783 TO 1861

From 1783 to the War of 1812

Throughout the 19th century, the largest permanent organization in the regular Army was the regiment, usually consisting of 10 subordinate companies. The brigade was a temporary organization only established to control forces of multiple regiments, usually more than three. Only during the War of 1812, the War with Mexico, the Civil War, and the War with Spain were brigades formally established. In all cases they were disestablished almost immediately upon the cessation of hostilities. Occasionally in the course of the Indian Wars or domestic operations, such as the Mormon Expedition, short-term brigades were sometimes formed in the field.

After the successful conclusion of the War for Independence, the United States' standing Army was allowed to shrink to microscopic proportions. The experience with the self-contained combined arms brigade was mostly forgotten except for a brief experiment on a larger scale, with the US Legion from 1792 to 1796. The Legion, which was the standing Army as a whole, was divided into four sub-Legions, each commanded by a brigadier-general and authorized 1,280 men. Subordinate organizations included two battalions of infantry, one battalion of riflemen, a company of artillery, and a troop of dragoons.[1] After 1796, the Army reverted back to a more conventional single branch regimental organization, with no established permanent units above the regiment.

In 1792, with a small standing Army and a militia tradition, Congress established a structure for larger units of the militia, for possible use in time of emergency, providing for, at least on paper, brigades and divisions. A militia infantry brigade's strength would be roughly 2,500 men, with four subordinate regiments, each divided into two battalions of four companies. The latter was a departure from Continental Army regiments, which generally had its eight companies organized as a single battalion. The brigade staff, unlike in the later stages of the Revolutionary War, was small, being limited to the brigade commander and his primary assistant, called either the brigade major or brigade inspector. This system was, however, not implemented in practice. No state raised any unit larger than a battalion for Federal service. Congress additionally added a third component of the Army, to go along with the Regular Army and the militia, with the calling up of volunteers. The volunteers, until requested, would not be part of any standing, organized force. With the extensive legal restrictions on the use of the militia, the use of volunteers would be the primary method by which the United States mobilized large forces for use in wartime in the 19th century.[2] An exception to this was that the War of 1812, fought in or near many of the largest states, saw the extensive use of militia.

The War of 1812

When the new war with Britain began in 1812, Congress immediately raised forces by expanding the size of the Regular Army, while calling for volunteers and mobilizing the militia. The largest new units raised were regiments. The use of higher units—brigades and divisions—was a lot more of an ad hoc nature than it had been in the Revolutionary War.

Usually a field commander would organize his army into brigades at the start of a campaign or whenever reorganization was necessary. Most army commanders controlled brigades directly, forces usually being somewhat smaller than during the Revolutionary War. Typically regiments would be assigned to brigades based on seniority, with brigades numbered according to the seniority of their commanders. Given the ad hoc nature of this organizational structure, brigades could vary in strength from 400 to 2,000 soldiers. As a general rule, regular regiments, militia regiments, and volunteer regiments were brigaded separately under commanders from their own components. While Army documents of the era stated that a brigade staff would only consist of the brigade major, public law provided for a staff similar to that employed in the later years of the Revolutionary War: five officers on the brigade staff (brigade inspector, brigade subinspector, brigade quartermaster, wagon master, chaplain) and, on the brigade commander's personal staff, the brigade major and several aides de camp.[3]

The rank of brigadier-general was, again, tied directly to the brigade. The peacetime Army of 1812 had three generals: one major-general, and two brigadier-generals. During the war, a total of 25 additional officers were appointed to the rank in the Regular Army. Several more served temporarily in the militia and volunteers. Given promotions, battlefield losses, and resignations, Congressional oversight kept the number of brigadiers at 12 for most of the war:

Table 2. Brigadier-Generals, War of 1812

Year	Appointed	Promoted	KIA	POW	Off Rolls	Total BGs EOY
1812	12	0	0	0	0	12
1813	9	4	1	3	0	13
1814	6	2	0	0	5	12
1815	0	0	0	0	0	12
Total	27	6	1	3	5	

In Congressional hearings on the number of generals to be appointed, the War Department formally gave its opinion that a brigade consisting of 2,000 men organized in two regiments was the appropriate command for a brigadier-general. With the Regular Army expanded to 37 infantry regiments for the war, seven prewar, 10 more in 1812, and 20 more in 1813, the number of brigadier-generals actually averaged about one for every three regiments, though several, instead of commanding brigades, commanded one of the nine geographic military districts.[4]

After the War of 1812, the Army was reduced to seven infantry regiments and three brigadier-generals. Despite the small size of the force, the Army Regulations of 1821, drawn up by Brigadier-General Winfield Scott, one of the most successful brigade commanders of the war, envisioned much larger organizations, including the army corps, to consist of two or more divisions. The brigade was to consist of two regiments and only the brigade major remained on the staff. Brigades would be numbered according to the seniority of their commanders, but, in official reports, they would be referred to by their commander's name. A further revision to the regulation in 1841 allowed for a bigger brigade staff, but stated that its size and composition would be based on the specific mission of the unit. All this organizational thought was purely notional as the Army did not operationally field units larger than a regiment.[5]

The Mexican War

At the start of the Mexican War in 1845, the Army had eight infantry regiments, two dragoon (mounted infantry) regiments, and four artillery regiments. In early 1846, a third mounted regiment, the US Mounted Rifles, was added. In 1847, eight additional infantry regiments, a rifle regiment, and a third dragoon regiment were added to the regular Army for the duration of the war. As the war was to be fought mostly on foreign soil, the militia was not called out. Instead, Congress authorized 50,000 volunteers in May 1846, of which 18,210 were mustered into Federal service, the small number based on belief in a short war. When the war continued into fall and winter of 1846, many of the volunteer units were due to be mustered out, as their terms of service were for only 12 months. Accordingly there was a second call for volunteers that enlisted 33,596 men whose term of service was for the duration of the war.[6]

Both regular and volunteer units were organized permanently at no higher than regimental level. Volunteer regiments and smaller units were recruited and organized on a state basis. Field commanders then organized brigades and divisions in the field. For example, in early 1846 Zachary Taylor organized his force, which advanced from Texas into Mexico with 3,500 men in five regular Army infantry regiments, one dragoon regiment, and several batteries of artillery and parts of four artillery regiments fighting as infantry, into three brigades.[7]

The grade of brigadier-general remained tied to the number of brigades or brigade equivalents fielded by the Army. In 1845, there were one major-general and three brigadier-generals in the peacetime Army, one of the brigadiers serving in the staff position of quartermaster general. An additional two officers held the rank of brigadier-general by brevet only.[8] A brevet rank was an honorary one. In the days before medals, a brevet promotion was one of the few ways an officer could be recognized. In the Mexican War, brevet rank was used whenever the command consisted of soldiers from more than one Army component. Since all the forces used in the war consisted of a mix of regulars and volunteers, brevet rank was to be significant.

Including the two brevet appointments and ignoring the staff brigadier-general, the quartermaster general, there were four brigadier-general equivalents in an Army with only eight infantry regiments and two cavalry regiments, giving a ratio of one brigadier-general for roughly every two and a half regiments, not far removed from the two regiment brigade structure officially envisioned by Army regulations. At the height of the war, when the Regular Army had been expanded to 18 regiments of infantry and cavalry, there were three line brigadier-generals and three by brevet only. The ratio of brigadiers to regiments rose slightly to three to

Table 3. Brigadier-Generals, Mexican War

Year	Brevet Brigadier-Generals	Brigadier-Generals	
	Regular Army	Regular Army	Volunteers
1845	2	3	-
1846	1	4	7
1847	3	4	12
1848	3	4	10
1849	3	4	-

In addition, nine regular officers served as acting brigade commanders; one major, five lieutenant colonels, one Marine lieutenant colonel, and two colonels

one. In the volunteer service, where 42 regiments were raised for 12 months service in 1846 and 1847, 12 brigadier-generals were appointed, giving a slightly higher ratio of 3.5 regiments per general for the volunteer service. A breakdown of appointments is shown in Table 3.

As in the War of 1812, brigades were generally organized and used in the Mexican War as temporary expedients or as part of a larger unit, usually a division. For the first time, large volunteer forces were raised. These were also formed into brigades and, in some cases, into divisions. Regular and volunteer regiments were usually not brigaded together. Unlike in the later Civil War, most of the senior officers commanding volunteer brigades and divisions were themselves holders of exclusively volunteer commissions. Since the Regular Army was in the field, its officers were needed to command their own units. A typical brigade consisted of two 500-man regiments. In the volunteer force, regiments from the same state were generally brigaded together. Sometimes the senior volunteer officer from the state was made brigadier-general of volunteers to command such a brigade. For example, Colonel Gideon J. Pillow, 1st Tennessee Volunteers, was commissioned as brigadier-general of volunteers and made commander of the Tennessee Brigade, consisting of the 1st and 2d Tennessee Volunteer Regiments. But even such arrangements could prove to be transitory—in the case of the Tennessee brigade, Taylor reassigned its units as he saw fit almost immediately after the brigade came under his command.[9]

While usually part of a larger organization, most brigades were supported directly by one or more companies of artillery and some also by mounted infantry or dragoons. Although the current version of the Army regulations maintained that brigade staffs would not be fixed and would be based on the specific mission of the brigade, President James Polk and Congress did authorize a staff consisting a quartermaster and assistant, a commissary officer and assistant, a surgeon and his assistant, and a chaplain.[10]

The Utah Expedition

After the end of the Mexican War, the volunteers were mustered out and the Regular Army was reduced back to its small permanent size of eight infantry regiments, one mounted rifle, two dragoon regiments, and four artillery regiments, as well as four brigadier-generals, counting the quartermaster general. The Army settled down to frontier security, constabulary, and coast defense duties.

In 1857, however, Mormon defiance of Federal authority in the Utah territory compelled President James Buchanan to order the Army to assemble the largest peacetime force of the era to occupy Utah and enforce Federal governmental authority. Accordingly, a detachment of 5,606 soldiers was ultimately assembled, including four regiments of infantry, one regiment each of dragoons and cavalry, and three companies of artillery. Brigadier-General Persifer F. Smith was assigned to command the force, serving in his brevet rank of major-general. Upon assembly, Smith was directed to form his command into two brigades headed by his two senior officers, Colonels Albert S. Johnston and William S. Harney. Both Harney and Johnston would be serving in their brevet rank of brigadier-general. However, Smith died before he could arrive and assume command. The Mormon crisis was settled through diplomacy and there was no longer a need for such a large force. Johnston, now in command, moved into Utah with a reduced force, and the brigades were never actually formed.[11]

Within three years of the Utah Expedition, much larger forces would be assembled to fight the insurrection the southern states started in reaction to the election of Republican Abraham Lincoln as Buchanan's successor.

NOTES

1. James Sawicki, *Cavalry Regiments of the US Army* (Dumfries, VA: Wyvern Publication, 1985), 15-16.
2. John B. Wilson, *Maneuver and Firepower: The Evolution of Divisions and Separate Brigades*. Army Lineage Series (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1998), 6-7.
3. Ibid., 8-9.
4. James Sawicki, *Infantry Regiments of the US Army* (Dumfries, VA: Wyvern, 1981), 2.
5. Wilson, 9.
6. *The United States and Mexico at War: Nineteenth-Century Expansionism and Conflict*, Donald S. Frazier, ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1998), 24-27, 464-65.
7. Ibid., 27, 308.
8. The brigadier-generals were Edmund Gaines, John E. Wool and the Quartermaster General Thomas S. Jesup. The brevet brigadier-generals were Zachary Taylor, colonel, 6th Infantry, and William J. Worth, colonel, 8th Infantry.
9. Frazier, 321. Pillow was later made a major-general in the Regular Army, an appointment he resigned at the end of the war.
10. Wilson, 10.
11. Headquarters of the Army Circular, dated 11 January 1858; General Orders Number 7, Headquarters of the Army, dated 15 April 1858; General Orders Number 14, Headquarters of the Army, 21 May 1858; General Orders Number 17, Headquarters of the Army, dated 29 June 1858; Robert W. Coakley, *The Role of Federal Military Forces in Domestic Disorders 1789-1878* (Washington, DC; US Army, 1988), 196-200; 210-15.

Chapter 3

BRIGADES IN THE CIVIL WAR

Organization

In sheer numerical size, the United States raised its largest force of brigades ever in the American Civil War. Between 1861 and 1865 the United States, or Union, forces established over 200 brigades to fight the war. These brigades were almost always part of a higher command, division and army corps, as the division was then considered the Army's basic administrative and organizational unit. The army corps, as a headquarters controlling two or more divisions, made its first appearance in the US Army organizational history. While unit designations evolved during the course of the war, the army corps became the uniquely designated command, retaining its numerical designation even when it was shifted to a different command. Divisions and brigades, on the other hand, were numbered sequentially within their respective higher command and called in official reports by their current commander's name. As an exception to this, before 1863 in the portion of the Army fighting in the Western theater, brigades were numbered sequentially within their respective army.[1]

Similar to events in the Mexican War, the US government called up a large number of volunteers to fight the war. Unlike the Mexican War, the pure numbers of the volunteers dwarfed the small Regular Army. Additionally, regular officers were allowed to accept higher commissions in the volunteer service, thus fairly wrecking the chain of command of the regular units. With recruiting difficulties, the Regular Army, despite being expanded at the beginning of the war, basically withered away during the conflict. The war was fought primarily by the volunteers.

Similarly to the Revolutionary and Mexican Wars, brigades often started with regiments all from the same state, or composed exclusively of regular regiments. Attrition and a virtually nonexistent replacement system broke this down rather quickly. As in the Revolutionary War, commanders sought to keep brigades up to a strength of at least 2,000 men by adding additional regiments, even as the more veteran regiments grew smaller and smaller. Initially the minimum number of regiments in a brigade was two, but this was soon changed to four. At Chancellorsville, Virginia, in 1863, Union brigades averaged 4.7 regiments with a strength of 2,000. At Cold Harbor, Virginia, a year later, they averaged 5.5 regiments with the same strength. In the later stages of the war, whole brigades were amalgamated, as were several whole corps, to retain commands of adequate strength.

Only one brigade retained its organization throughout the entire war, the Vermont Brigade, formally the 2d Brigade, 2d Division, Sixth Corps. This brigade, raised in early 1862, retained the 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, and 6th Vermont Volunteer Infantry Regiments throughout the war and added the 11th Vermont, formerly the 1st Vermont Heavy Artillery Regiment, in 1864. The brigade was able to stay together because all its regiments reenlisted when their enlistments ran out in 1864. The brigade also, naturally because of its long, continuous service, suffered the most fatal combat casualties of any brigade in the war, with 1,172 men killed or dying of wounds while serving in its ranks. These losses were distributed almost evenly throughout the brigade:

Table 4. Vermont Brigade Losses, 1862-1865

Brigade	Killed/ Died of Wounds
2d Vermont (1862-1865)	224
3d Vermont (1862-1865)	206
4th Vermont (1862-1865)	162
5th Vermont (1862-1865)	213
6th Vermont (1862-1865)	203
11th Vermont (1864-1865)	164
Total	1,172

As with many units in the east, the Vermont Brigade's toughest week was when it participated in the Battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania. During that week the brigade suffered 266 killed, 1,299 wounded, and 80 missing, a total of 1,645 casualties out of a command that started with 2,800, giving a loss rate of 58 percent. The hardest single 24-hour period was 5-6 May 1864, in the Battle of the Wilderness when the brigade lost 195 killed, 1,017 wounded, and 57 missing, a total of 1,269 men.

Despite the relative stability of the brigade, the Vermont Brigade had two permanent commanders and four temporary commanders during the war. The original commander, Brigadier General William T.H. Brooks, a Regular Army infantry major, was promoted to division command late in 1862. He resigned in 1864 because of ill health, after failing to be promoted to major general of volunteers because of his part in his superior's, Major-General William Franklin's, attempt to discredit Army of the Potomac commander, Major-General Ambrose Burnside. Then Colonel Lewis A. Grant, commander, 5th Vermont, a former schoolteacher and lawyer, replaced Brooks and remained the permanent commander of the brigade until the end of the war. He later received the Medal of Honor for his actions at Salem Church during the Battle of Chancellorsville, and was promoted to brigadier general of volunteers in 1864. After the war he returned to his law practice.[2]

Four hundred and fifty men were commissioned as brigadier-generals in either the Regular Army or the volunteer service during the Civil War. Theoretically, all brigades were supposed to be commanded by brigadier-generals. However, the creation of the army corps as a level of command and the extensive use of field armies made up of several army corps created two new levels of command. Unfortunately, at the same time, Congress, except for appointing Ulysses S. Grant as the sole lieutenant-general in 1864, did not promote officers past the grade of major-general, the standard grade for a division commander. Accordingly, major-generals commanded armies and corps, as well as divisions. Brigadier-generals frequently commanded divisions, as well as brigades, often by using brevet promotions to major-general. Brigades, therefore, were often commanded by the senior regimental colonel rather than a general officer, most of whom were also brevet brigadier-generals. Authorizing officers to serve in their brevet grade had previously been a right reserved for the president, but in February 1865, this authority was delegated directly to the Army's commanding general, Lieutenant-General Ulysses Grant. For the first time in US military history, the grade of brigadier-general was no longer tied to the number of brigades the Army could assemble. From this time forward, it was simply the lowest grade of general officer.[3]

Although most brigades served just as a component of a corps, some retained distinctive nicknames even when their official designation changed. A good example of this is the famous Iron Brigade, which earned its nickname at Second Bull Run while officially designated 4th Brigade, 1st Division, Third Corps, Army of Virginia. Later at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, it reaffirmed its nickname while designated officially as the 1st Brigade, 1st Division, First Corps. Another famous brigade was the Irish Brigade—2d Brigade, 1st Division, Second Corps—originally composed of regiments recruited from the Irish immigrant population of New York City. Both brigades were eventually broken up when combat losses were not replaced.

While being almost purely a tactical unit consisting of only either infantry or cavalry regiments, the Civil War brigade did acquire a small staff as the war progressed: two aides de camp; a captain assistant adjutant general, who wrote out orders for the command; a surgeon; an assistant quartermaster; and a commissary officer. The brigade headquarters was also authorized three wagons to carry supplies. Each subordinate regiment was authorized an additional six wagons.[4]

For the first time, brigades had distinctive identifying flags for use on the battlefield. After abandoning an elaborate, but generic, flag system used early in the war, a new triangular flag was adopted for brigades. The flag would have the symbol used by parent corps on it and was color coded to indicate brigade and division number within the corps.

Infantry brigades in the Civil War consisted almost exclusively of infantrymen. Early war experiments placing supporting units of artillery and cavalry in the brigade were abandoned. Since brigades seldom fought separated from their parent corps, artillery eventually came to be consolidated at the corps level in a command, an artillery brigade. Despite the name, a typical corps artillery brigade consisted of between four and six artillery companies and was commanded by an artillery officer, usually a colonel, but sometimes a more junior officer.

Cavalry was rarely organized into units larger than the regiment before the Civil War. The branch had previously been divided into three components, dragoons, or mounted infantrymen, who were supposed to fight dismounted; mounted riflemen, who were dragoons equipped with rifled firearms; and cavalry, which was a lightly armed force designed to fight mounted. On the eve of the war, all three elements were consolidated into one branch, called, simply, cavalry. Unlike infantry regiments, cavalry regiments were usually divided into subordinate units, squadrons, and fought that way on the battlefield. After experiments in attaching cavalry directly to lower units, most army commanders organized their cavalry as a separate unit reporting directly to them. Depending on the amount of cavalry available, this unit would be a corps or division, each with subordinate pure cavalry brigades and one or two small brigades of horse artillery.

In the Civil War, the maneuver brigade was a purely tactical organization, almost always consisting of regiments belonging to one arm of the service, either infantry or cavalry. Additionally, brigades were almost always parts of larger organizations, divisions, which were, except for early in the war, themselves components of corps. The use of brigades in the Civil War was a continuation of their usage in the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, but on a larger scale. The poor regimental replacement system, which often left veteran regiments at skeletal strength, while raising new unblooded regiments, left the brigade as the basic fighting unit of consistent size. Since brigades were supposed to be commanded by general officers, their

size remained constant at about 2,000 soldiers, the difference being made up for by adding additional small regiments to the command. Consequently, in the war of attrition that the Civil War became, the brigade remained a unit of constant size that commanders could maneuver.

Little Round Top: A Civil War Brigade Action

Brigades were essential to the smooth execution of both offensive and defensive operations in the Civil War. While most brigades fought as part of a larger unit, an example of an action where two brigades were detached from their parent units to defend a key piece of terrain at Gettysburg will be used to illustrate how a brigade was fought during the war.

On 2 July 1863, the second day of the three-day Battle of Gettysburg, a corps-sized Confederate force under Lieutenant-General James Longstreet was ordered to attack the opposing Union army's left flank, which was anchored on a small ridge line, Cemetery Ridge, south of Gettysburg. Longstreet chose to attack in echelon from his right to left, with each of his divisions attacking in turn. His leftmost division, commanded by Major General John Hood, would begin the advance against the Union's left flank near a rocky outcrop, later called Devils Den, and a small rocky hill, locally called Little Round Top. Little Round Top's forward slope, facing the Confederates, had been cleared of vegetation by a farmer before the battle increasing its military importance. Its occupation by the Confederates threatened the whole

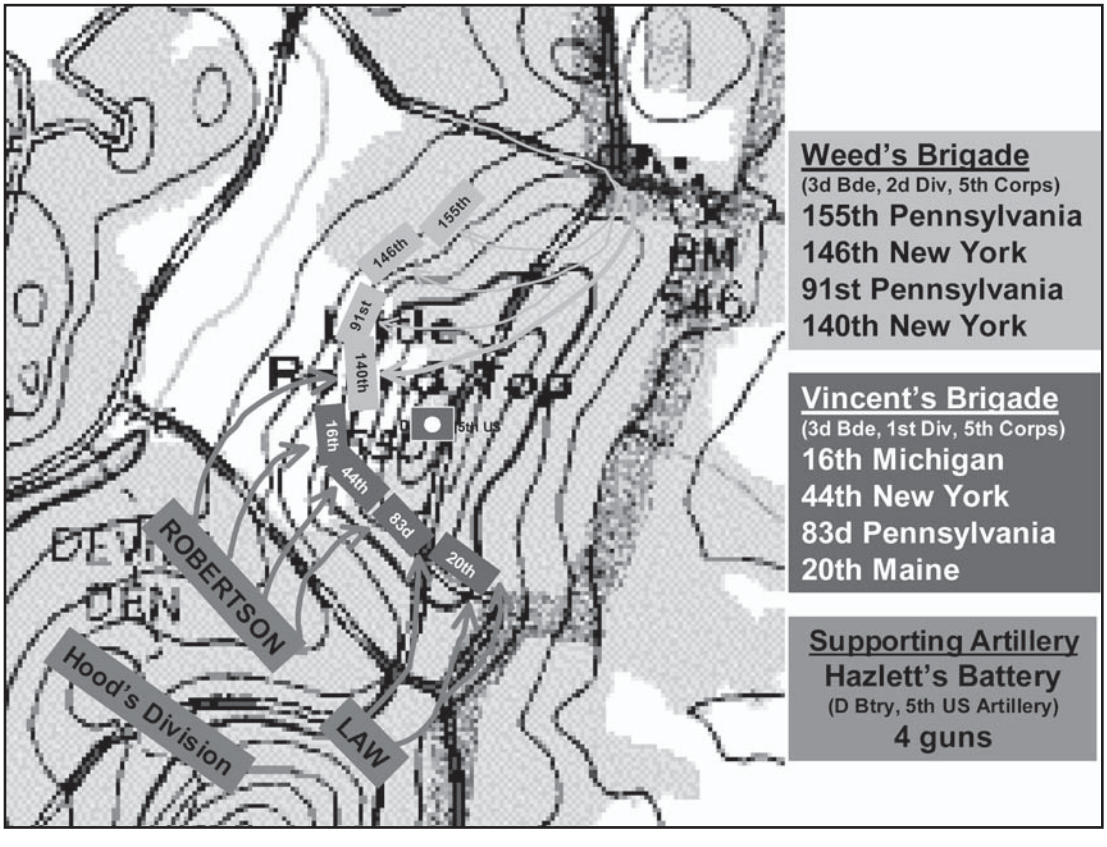


Figure 4. Action at Little Round Top, 2 July 1863

Union position. Its occupation by the Federal forces threatened any Confederate attack on the Union's left flank.[5]

However, the Union's left flank was in an uproar as Longstreet began his late afternoon attack. Major General Daniel Sickles had unilaterally moved his command, the Third Corps, forward of its assigned position. This move not only made him vulnerable to Longstreet's attack, but it also uncovered the Union's left flank near Little Round Top, exactly where Hood's leftmost brigades were poised to strike. Fortunately for the Union forces, Brigadier General Gouverneur K. Warren, the chief engineer officer, discovered the mistake and sent his aides out to find troops to defend Little Round Top.

The 3d Brigade, 1st Division, Fifth Corps, was commanded by Colonel Strong Vincent, 83d Pennsylvania. Aside from his own regiment, the brigade consisted of the 16th Michigan, 44th New York, and the 20th Maine. Vincent had assumed command in May when the previous brigade commander, Colonel Thomas Stockton, 16th Michigan, suddenly resigned. The brigade was greatly reduced in strength, with about 1,000 men bearing arms; the 20th Maine being the largest regiment at about 350 men, the 16th Michigan the smallest at about 200.[6] In the late afternoon of 2 July, the Fifth Corps was under orders to reinforce the Third Corps on the Union's left flank. But when Warren's aide, Captain Ranald Mackenzie, rode up to Major General George Sykes, commander, Fifth Corps, and asked for a brigade to hold Little Round Top, Sykes promptly ordered his First Division commander, Brigadier General James Barnes, to dispatch a brigade. Barnes chose Vincent's, as it was on a nearby road lined up in column.

There was a sense of urgency in this deployment, as Confederate troops were expected to advance on Little Round Top from the southwest momentarily. Vincent, therefore, set his brigade in motion toward Little Round Top to the south. As the brigade column stretched out for about a quarter mile, Vincent rode ahead to examine the ground he was to defend and select positions for the brigade on the south side of the hill in the direction the Confederates were expected to come. Vincent's energetic execution of his new mission and ability to place his troops in the best possible location to execute that mission would prove to be critical.

As each regiment arrived, Vincent brought the regimental commander up and showed him the regiment's position. The 20th Maine, under Colonel Joshua Chamberlain, was first and was posted on the extreme left. Vincent had to caution Chamberlain that, while his right would be tied into the next regiment, his left would be tied into nothing, becoming the left flank of the entire army. The main Union wagon train was also parked not far to the rear of Chamberlain's right flank, making this flank doubly important. Posted to the right of the 20th Maine was the 83d Pennsylvania. The small 16th Michigan was next, but Colonel James Rice, 44th New York, asked that his regiment be placed next to the 83d, as they had always fought side by side. Vincent agreed and the 16th Michigan was placed on the brigade's left flank, in the open area of Little Round Top facing Devil's Den. The 16th's left tied into the 44th New York, but its right was in the air. This was less crucial than the 20th Maine's left flank, though, as the Third Corps' 4th Maine Regiment was posted on the valley floor north of Devil's Den, as the left flank of a Third Corps brigade. There was, however, a sizeable gap between these two units.[7]

The regiments formed up in two lines across their assigned fronts. Soldiers stood shoulder to shoulder where possible. While later in the war the troops would have immediately dug entrenchments or thrown up vegetation as natural breastworks, at this stage of the war they

just used trees and boulders for cover where available. Each line in the regiment would fight by firing massed volleys at the attackers. As a standard measure, the regiments posted a company of troops in front of it to act as skirmishers. The skirmishers were designed to provide early warning of the enemy's approach. They fought in small groups and fired individually, using all available cover to break up the enemy attack before it reached the main line. The skirmishers would then fall back into their regiments. Chamberlain placed his Company B to cover the regiment's front and the brigade's left. The 16th Michigan dispatched two companies, including one of attached sharpshooters, to protect the brigade right flank.[8]

Vincent's troops were in position at approximately 1600. The Confederate advance reached Little Round Top within the next 15 minutes. Almost as soon as Vincent's skirmishers were posted, they encountered the main enemy line advancing. The right two brigades of Hood's division, Brigadier-General Jerome Robertson's composed of Texas and Arkansas regiments and Brigadier-General Evander Law's of Alabama troops, were to advance on Little Round Top roughly side by side from the southwest to flank the positions of the Federal Third Corps, which the left portion of Hood's division was about to assault. The skirmishers immediately withdrew. The 20th Maine's skirmishers, however, had been passed by the advancing Confederates and remained on the brigade flank waiting for an opportunity to rejoin the regiment.

The Confederate assault was somewhat uncoordinated. Advancing from covered terrain and on a front wider than that Vincent's men were defending, Robertson and Law had an excellent chance of overwhelming or outflanking the Federal brigade, which had both of its flanks in the air. After a pause to redress their lines, the rebel brigades advanced up the wooded, southern face of the hill. The attack developed first against the center regiments, 44th New York and 83d Pennsylvania, and then spread to the right to the 16th Michigan, and then on to the 20th Maine on the left. Robertson's brigade, the 4th and 5th Texas, made several abortive assaults against Vincent's center, having to break formation to pass between the large boulders that littered that part of the slope of Little Round Top.

To Robertson's left, Law's 4th Alabama also attacked the center of Vincent's position. This attack was not coordinated with the Texans or with Law's two other regiments on the right. These two regiments, the 15th and 47th Alabama, had fallen behind because of the exertion of scaling the heights of Round Top, the large, wooded hill south of Little Round Top. Colonel William Oates, 15th Alabama, was in command of both regiments with orders to seize Little Round Top, and, as the extreme right of the Confederate Army, to turn the Union flank. After a short rest on Round Top, Oates dispatched a company to capture the Union wagon train, and then set out to seize Little Round Top. Skirmishers kept the wagons safe. Oates' delay allowed the 20th Maine to volley fire into the 4th Alabama advancing to the right against the 83d Pennsylvania. Soon, however, Oates was giving the Maine men the fight of their lives.

Vincent directed his brigade's defense of Little Round Top from a position located behind the center of the unit. The battle soon developed into waves of attacks, the first two being disjointed regimental attacks, the third an all out attack in the pending twilight by the six regiments of the two Confederate brigades. As the battle raged over the course of an hour and a half, Vincent dispatched aides to both flanks to keep him informed and other runners to bring back additional ammunition and find reinforcements.

Figure 5. Vincent Directs His Brigade's Defense of Little Round Top
"Don't Give Up an Inch" by Don Troiani

Both sides were fatigued and the Union brigade had suffered heavy losses and was low on ammunition when the two rebel brigades advanced for the third time. While Vincent's center was firm, naturally entrenched behind boulders, Oates was trying to maneuver the 15th Alabama around the 20th Maine's left to turn the Union brigade's entire left flank. On the other flank, the 16th Michigan began to give away when an officer ordered a poorly timed short withdrawal. In the confusion, a third of the regiment, 45 men, were separated from the main line and out of the battle. After ordering the 44th New York to fire into the flank of the Confederates attacking the 16th, Vincent rushed to rally the Michiganers and was fatally wounded. He would be promoted to brigadier general of volunteers before he died, five days later. Rice, 44th New York, immediately assumed command of the brigade.[10]

Vincent was not alone in his quest for reinforcements. Warren had remained atop the northwest face of Little Round Top while Vincent deployed. Vincent's march passed out of Warren's view on the east side of the summit, so he was still in search of units to garrison the hill. Barnes, one of the Fifth Corps division commanders, had dispatched First Lieutenant Charles Hazlett's four-gun battery, D Battery, 5th Artillery, to Little Round Top to support his division's advance forward of the hill. Hazlett met Warren at the summit and, despite the rugged terrain, the guns were manhandled to the top and soon were firing at the Confederates attacking Vincent's left and beyond near Devil's Den.

Warren needed infantry and, with his aides already out, he went looking for some himself. North of Little Round Top the bulk of the Fifth Corps was now marching to support the Third Corps, which was being attacked by the bulk of Longstreet's force. Warren came upon elements of the 3d Brigade, 2d Division, Fifth Corps, waiting to move up. In an ironic twist, this was his old command. The previous September he had commanded this brigade when it had unsuccessfully tried to hold the Union's left flank against Hood's Texans at the Battle of Second Bull Run. Now Warren found the commander of the lead regiment, Colonel Patrick O'Rorke, 140th New York, with his regiment just north of Little Round Top. On his own authority, he gave O'Rorke, who knew him well, orders to move to Little Round Top. The regiment, 526 men strong, was formed on the road to the Wheatfield, the main east-west road running north of Little Round Top, in a column of fours. O'Rorke, not hesitating, turned the head of his column to the left and advanced at a slow run in a column of fours to the top of the hill. Sykes had intended to send the brigade O'Rorke's regiment was in, commanded by Brigadier General Stephen Weed, to Little Round Top even before Warren snatched up the regiment. However, the order got muddled in the sending and Sykes had to reiterate it to Weed, who was not with his brigade when the 140th moved. Weed acted promptly upon returning to his command, leading the rest of his brigade to Little Round Top behind O'Rorke's troops.[11]

The 140th New York, with O'Rorke in the lead, reached the forward slope of Little Round Top just as the 16th Michigan was about to give way. The 140th, still in a column of fours advanced forward, halted, and fired into the Confederate attackers. The timely arrival of these reinforcements quickly secured the flank and blunted the impetus of the Confederate attack. However, O'Rorke, like Vincent minutes before, was mortally wounded by a minié ball and died before he hit the ground. The rest of Weed's brigade, the 91st Pennsylvania, 146th New York, and 155th Pennsylvania, formed up on the 140th's right, securing that side of Little Round Top.

There were no reinforcements coming to secure the critical left flank where the 20th Maine, low on ammunition and reduced in strength, was attempting to prevent being outflanked by one Alabama regiment while being attacked frontally by another. Both attacker and defender had almost reached the breaking point on this flank. Chamberlain, in order to defend against both threats, had thinned his line out and swung his left back to form an inverted V. Still the Confederates came on. In desperation born of a lack of ammunition resupply, Chamberlain ordered a bayonet charge with his regiment swinging from left to right across the regimental front. The shock effect of this unexpected maneuver, along with the opportune reappearance of the 20th Maine's company of skirmishers, along with some US sharpshooters, routed the Alabamans. The 20th Maine quickly took over 450 prisoners, including some troops from the two Texas regiments.

Vincent's brigade, reinforced by the 140th New York, had conducted, perhaps, the most important brigade defensive action of the war. While the main attacks were over, balls were still flying and both Weed and Hazlett were mortally wounded. The day's action had cost the Union forces two brigade commanders, a regimental commander, and an artillery commander. Total losses for the brigade in the battle were 88 killed, 253 wounded, and 11 missing or captured, roughly 35-percent losses. A year and 10 months later at Appomattox, the brigade was part of the honor guard specially selected to accept the Confederate surrender. The remnants of all the

Gettysburg regiments, except the 44th New York, were still part of the brigade, along with six other regiments, including the 91st and 155th Pennsylvania, which had been in Weed's brigade on Little Round Top.[12]

Brigades in the War With Spain

After the Civil War, the Army again was reduced in size and no permanent units above regimental level were retained. It was not until the 1890s that the Army made any significant organizational changes, the most important being the reorganization of the regiment with three subordinate battalions. When an army was raised in 1898 to fight Spain, many of the precedents established in the Civil War were followed. Volunteers were called out and eight corps were raised. At full strength, each corps had three divisions with three brigades each. When a corps' strength was less than a full division of three brigades, the extra brigade or two were considered "separate" and fell directly under the corps headquarters. An act of Congress in 1898 had established the brigade as consisting of three or more regiments, though in practice some would only have two. Brigade designations followed the pattern established in the Civil War, with brigades numbered sequentially by division and corps, with no unique designations.

Unlike the previous war, the Regular Army was kept mostly intact during the short war with Spain. Most brigades were either all regular troops or all volunteer. The regiments of the regular force were mostly consolidated into the brigades of the Fifth Corps, with some in the Fourth Corps. Most volunteers raised did not see action. The Fifth Corps provided the attack force for the expedition to Cuba. The Fourth Corps served in an occupation role in Cuba and Puerto Rico. The Eighth Corps served as the Philippine Expedition and was active in those islands long after the other corps had been disbanded.

While almost every state and several territories contributed at least one regiment of infantry or cavalry volunteers, no brigades were formed with regiments all from the same state. A special category of volunteers, recruited from the nation at large, rather than from particular states, was used extensively during the war itself in 1898 and in operations in the Philippines in 1899-1901.[13]

The Philippine Expedition, which formally lasted from 1898 to 1901, saw the Eighth Corps, the command headquarters in the islands, organized into as many as seven brigades at its largest size in January 1900. The organization in the Philippines was a lot more flexible than elsewhere. Artillery batteries were often attached directly to brigades and infantry and cavalry regiments were sometimes brigaded together.

As in previous wars, the authorized grade of a brigade commander was brigadier general. However, with the paucity of general grades, like in the Civil War, regimental colonels and lieutenant colonels often commanded brigades for extended periods of time, the most famous being Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, 1st US Volunteer Cavalry, who commanded the 2nd Brigade, Cavalry Division, Fifth Corps, in July 1898, after the Battle of San Juan Hill.[55] The war itself had two phases, a short campaign against Spain in April-July 1898, and a longer war from 1898 to 1901 in the Philippines against Filipino insurgents. This duality saw the unusual situation of some general officers holding two volunteer commissions, one for the 1898 campaign and a subsequent one, sometimes at a lesser grade, in the Philippines. While

most volunteer appointments went to senior Regular Army field grade officers, several were given to former Union and Confederate Civil War general officers directly from civilian life.

At the end of the century, the maneuver brigade remained a temporary organization consisting of little or no headquarters staff and troops from a single branch, infantry, or cavalry. The brigade structure had changed little from the establishment of the first brigades in the War of 1812. The main reason for this static organizational development was, that, despite technological advances in weaponry, infantry and cavalry tactics were generally unchanged. And a brigadier general could still control on the battlefield a force of 2,000 men divided into several large regiments or several more smaller regiments. However military and technological advances would see changes in the next century.

NOTES

1. Mark M. Boatner III, *The Civil War Dictionary* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 611.
2. Ezra Warner, *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 47, 182-44. The Franklin affair was an incident where several generals, Brooks included, complained directly to President Abraham Lincoln concerning their army commander, Major General Ambrose Burnside, after the Battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862.
3. To further confuse things, brevets that had formerly been exclusively granted solely in the regular service, were also granted in the volunteer service after 3 March 1863. The first brevet brigadier-general of volunteers was appointed in June 1864. A Regular Army officer could, therefore, hold four grades in the Civil War—his substantive regular grade, a brevet regular grade, a substantive volunteer grade, and a brevet volunteer grade. At Appomattox, for example, the famous George Custer was a regular army captain, 5th Cavalry, a brevet major-general in the regular army, a brigadier-general of volunteers, and a brevet major general of volunteers. Two weeks later, he was promoted to the substantive rank of major-general of volunteers. In 1866 when the volunteer force went away, he was a captain in the Regular Army again. See Roger D. Hunt and Jack R. Brown, *Brevet Brigadier Generals in Blue* (Old Soldier Books, 1998), vi-vii.
4. John B. Wilson, *Maneuver and Firepower: The Evolution of Divisions and Separate Brigades.* Army Lineage Series (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office (GPO), 1998), 14.
5. Best source for the background of the Little Round Top battle is Henry Pfanz, *Gettysburg—The Second Day* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 113-15, 149-67.
6. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies.* Series 1, 53 Vols. (Washington, DC: GPO, 1881-1898) (hereafter *OR*), Series I, Volume XXVII, Art 1, Book 43, 616-20.
7. Pfanz, 211-14.
8. Ibid., 214.
9. Pfanz, 220-23.
10. Pfanz, 225-27.
11. *OR*, Series I, Volume XXVII, art 1, Book 43, 771; The 44th New York was mustered out in October 1864 when its three year enlistment ran out.
12. John McGrath, *Organization of the Army During the Spanish-American War*, unpublished monograph, US Army Center of Military History, 2002. As US volunteers, three regiments of infantry, three of cavalry, and three of engineers were raised in 1898 for service in the Philippines, 24 regiments of infantry and one regiment of cavalry were raised in 1899, serving until 1901. The latter regiments were numbered above the highest numbered regiments in the regular service; 10th in the cavalry and 25th in the infantry.
13. Ibid. Roosevelt commanded in the absence of Brigadier General Samuel B. M. Young. The brigade consisted of Roosevelt's regiment and the regular 1st and 10th US Cavalry. Though designated cavalry, the regiments fought on foot during the war as infantry.

Chapter 4

THE BRIGADE IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY, 1902-1919

Organizational Reforms

After almost a century of unchanging organizational structure at the brigade level, technological and organizational advances would transform both warfare and the brigade in the early 20th century, resulting in the eventual adoption of a permanent brigade organization with organic supporting arms. Participation in a European war would directly spur most aspects of these changes. But as the century started, these dynamic events were still in the future.

With the volunteers in the Philippines mustered out in 1901, the regiment returned to its status as the largest permanent unit in the Regular Army. However, the period before the US entry in the World War I was one of great reforms in the US Army, some in reflection of the experience of the war with Spain, others from observing the large conscript armies maintained by most of the European powers. As a first response to this, Secretary of War Elihu Root established an Army general staff in 1903. Army planners in this new agency soon turned their attention to units larger than regiments.

Before World War I, the basic unit in European armies was the army corps, usually consisting of two infantry divisions, each with two brigades of two regiments. The European corps also contained cavalry, engineers, and field artillery. The US Army, too, had used the corps as its basic unit in both the Civil and Spanish-American Wars. But in the new 1905 version of the Army's regulations, the division became the US Army's basic unit. While the regulation did not organize permanent larger units, it directed commanders to form provisional brigades and divisions during maneuvers. A division of either infantry or cavalry was to consist of three brigades, each with two or more regiments.[1]

The Dick Act of 1903 reformed the role of the militia, now universally referred to as the National Guard. Where formerly the militia had been restricted in its use, necessitating the employment of the volunteer component, under the new law, National Guard units could be called upon by the Federal government for unrestricted service in times of national emergency. The Guard was also tasked to maintain units with the same organizational structure and standard as the Regular Army. Pennsylvania had maintained a nonstandard division since 1879, and New York organized a division in 1908. These were the first peacetime permanently organized brigades and divisions in the Army's force structure. The Dick Act led to annual joint maneuvers and plans to organize the part-time and full-time forces together into permanent larger units. In 1909, the War Department divided the country into eight districts. The theory was to organize brigades and divisions from the Regular Army and National Guard units stationed in each district. The scheme was voluntary for the National Guard, and by 1910 most states in the northeast had agreed to participate, though no brigades were actually formed.[2]

Between 1910 and 1914, various notional organizations were proposed and authorized. The division was now to be uniquely numbered in order of creation, while brigades remained being numbered consecutively within the division. Only in 1911 was theory put into practice. That year, disorders in Mexico led to the assembly of part of the Regular Army on the border in Texas and California. The portion in Texas was organized into a division at San Antonio,

Texas, the Maneuver Division, consisting of three infantry brigades and a separate cavalry brigade, the Independent Cavalry Brigade. At Galveston, Texas, 36 companies of coast artillery were reorganized into three infantry regiments, forming a provisional brigade guarding the coast. In San Diego, California, another brigade was formed from two infantry regiments and small detachments of medical, signal, and cavalry. This concentration lasted five months, the brigades being discontinued in June and July 1911. In 1913, the Secretary of War, Henry Stimson, as part of a general review of Army organization, accepted a proposal to organize the Army permanently into divisions and brigades. The Regular Army was to organize one cavalry and three infantry divisions and the National Guard an additional 12 infantry and three cavalry divisions. For the first time the Army produced formal tables of organization. A division had three brigades and each brigade three regiments. Cavalry brigades were, however, reduced to two regiments, primarily to save road space, not out of any belief in the organizational soundness of a two-regiment brigade. Brigades in the divisions were numbered consecutively within the Army, the 1st Division containing the 1st, 2d, and 3d Brigades; the 2d Division containing the 4th, 5th, 6th Brigades; and so forth. Where several brigades were not filled (3d and 9th Brigades), the numbers were retained for future use. Cavalry brigades were numbered separately.[3]

Unlike previous plans, the Stimson Plan was implemented in fact in 1913-1914. The Army organization is illustrated in Figure 6. Aside from a commander and very small staff, division and brigade headquarters staffs were not organized as such. Personnel for these would be taken out of hide from the administrative departments or from subordinate regiments, a long standing Army practice. The division was to be a self-contained, combined arms organization, while the brigade remained purely branch specific. The divisions and some of the brigades were

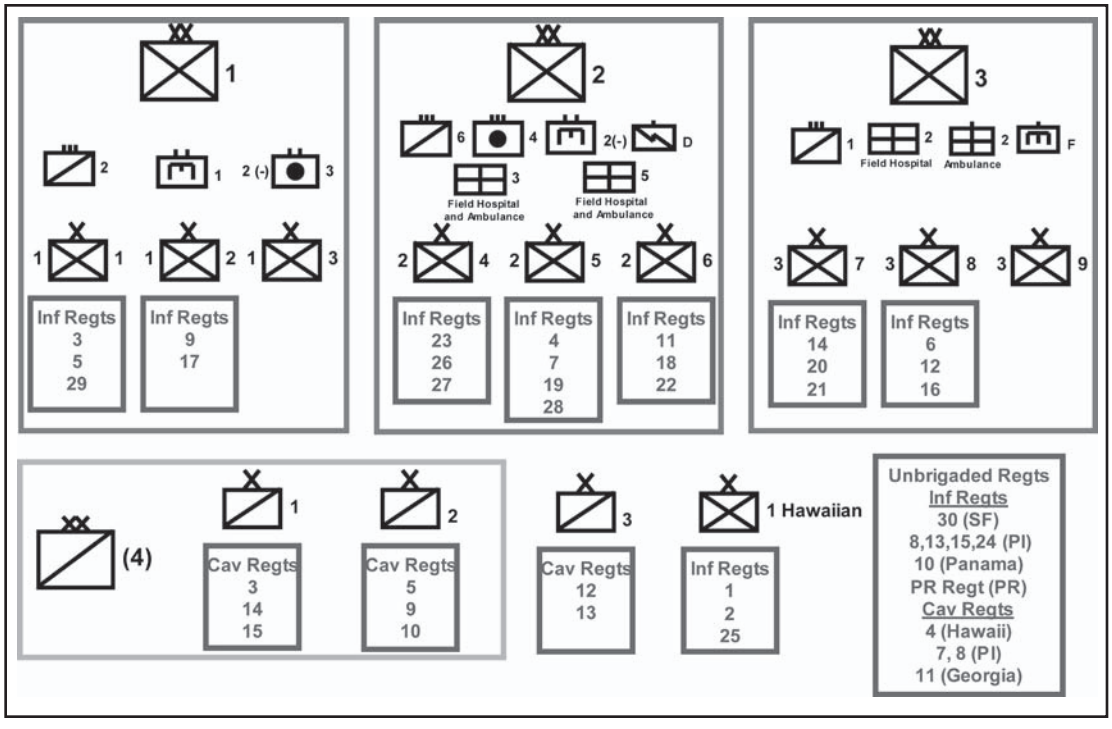


Figure 6. First Peacetime Brigades, 1914

scattered at various posts and would not be considered operational until they were mobilized. The organization would soon be tested again on the Mexican border.

Mexican Expeditions

In February 1913, when the Mexican disorders climaxed in a coup d'etat, President William Taft ordered a show of force on the Texas border. The new 2d Division, the only division with three full brigades, moved to locations on the Texan Gulf coast. In April 1914, the new president, Woodrow Wilson, ordered naval action against the port in Vera Cruz, Mexico, to protect American citizens and interests. The 5th Brigade, 2d Division, augmented with cavalry, field artillery, signal, aviation, engineers, and quartermasters, landed at the port to relieve the Navy personnel, in effect becoming the first brigade combat team in Army history. The brigade, under Brigadier General Frederick Funston's command, stayed until November 1914. In Texas, the 2d and 8th Brigades from the other two divisions moved to the border to replace the 2d Division elements. In December 1914, the 6th Brigade of the 2d Division deployed to the Arizona border. The 2d Division remained on station until October 1915, when it was demobilized after a hurricane in Galveston killed a number of soldiers and made the public question the necessity for the continuation of the deployment.[4]

The situation reversed itself again in March 1916 when Mexican bandits raided Columbus, New Mexico. The commander of the Southern Department, now Major General Funston,

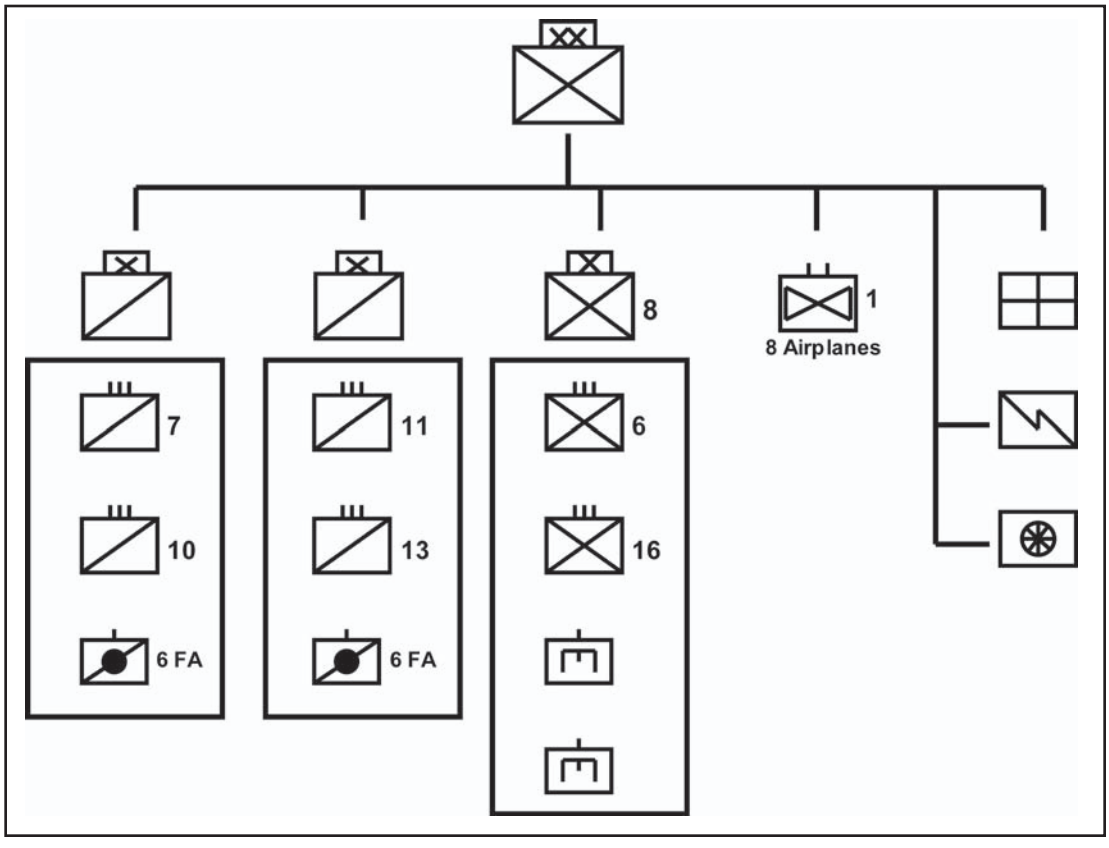


Figure 7. Pershing's Provisional Division, 1916

ordered Brigadier General John J. Pershing, commander, 8th Brigade, to chase down the attackers. Pershing organized a provisional division, the Punitive Expedition, US Army, out of his own brigade and additional troops given him. The divisional organization was of Pershing's own devising, and consisted of three combined arms brigades: two cavalry brigades, each with two cavalry regiments and a field artillery battery, and an infantry brigade with two infantry regiments and two engineer companies (see Figure 7). Pershing planned to pursue the Mexicans with the cavalry and use the infantry for security.[5]

In June 1916, as Pershing was preparing his expedition, violence on the border increased to the point that President Wilson federalized all the National Guard units assigned to divisions and brigades under the Stimson Plan. Except for the New York and Pennsylvania divisions, the planned mobilization of brigades and divisions worked poorly. In August, the War Department directed Funston to form the Guard units into 10 provisional divisions and six separate brigades. The border calmed down over time. The first Guardsmen were demobilized in the fall, with most released from Federal control by March 1917. Pershing's expedition remained south of the border until February 1917. Pershing then replaced Funston, who had died suddenly, as Southern Department commander. As such, he organized the Regular Army units in the department into three provisional infantry divisions and a cavalry brigade. In April, the United States entered World War I and Pershing disbanded his divisions and brigades as the Army again reorganized, this time to send an expeditionary force to Europe.[6]

The Brigade and World War I: The Square Division

The major European powers had been at war since August 1914 when the United States entered the conflict in April 1917. The continental European armies began World War I with large conscript armies organized rigidly into corps of two divisions, each with two infantry brigades. Each brigade consisted of two infantry regiments. The powers deployed machine guns differently. In the German army, a separate machine gun company was found at the regimental level. The French had only a platoon at the regiment. The reality of fighting entrenched infantry equipped with machine guns and supported by massed, quick-firing field artillery, made the French and Germans change the structure of their divisions during the course of the war. With attrition and the accompanying agony of trench warfare, the French and Germans had, by 1916, reduced their divisions from four infantry regiments to three. Operationally, the regiments reported directly to the division commander, though the Germans retained a brigade headquarters to control the three regiments administratively. At the same time, machine guns were increased. Both placed a machine gun company in each infantry battalion (there being three per regiment) by 1918. Smaller divisions allowed divisions worn out by trench warfare to be replaced in the line by a similar unit.[7]

American planners looked at the French and British experience. Ironically, however, a study completed in May 1917 by the War Department's War College Division, recommended an organization structurally similar to the French and German 1914 divisions. This was the square division, organized with two infantry brigades, instead of the traditional three, each with two subordinate infantry regiments. Though machine gun units were organized at three echelons, regiment, brigade, and division, the structure also provided, once organized for combat, for one machine gun company to support each infantry battalion. The design was approved, though it was tweaked and changed numerous times in 1917-1918. The theory behind the organization

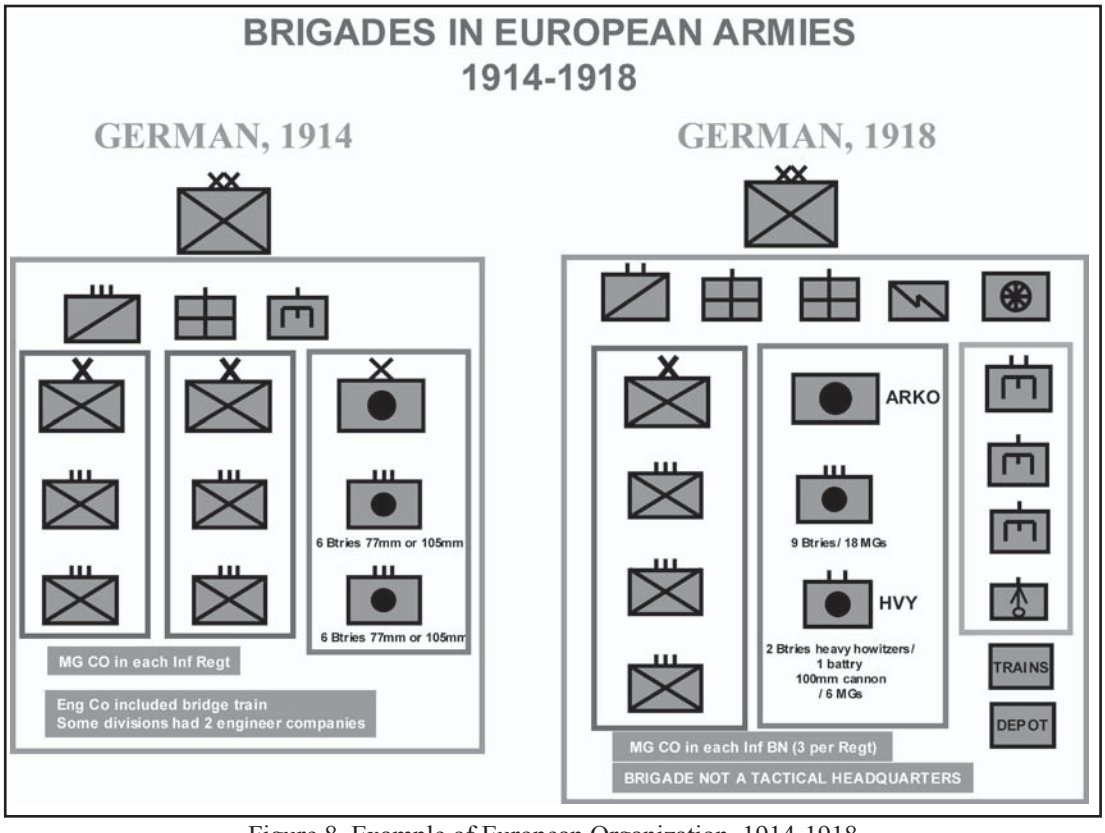


Figure 8. Example of European Organization, 1914-1918

was that the division would normally defend or attack with its two brigades side by side, but with each brigade having one regiment forward and the second regiment in reserve directly behind it. The regiments would typically deploy its battalions in a column for either an in-depth defense or to allow the rotation of fresh battalions in the offensive, with the reserve regiment either then taking over to continue the attack or to consolidate the position gained.[8] Therefore the brigade was to be the basic US Army tactical unit for trench warfare. This was different from the French, British, and Germans who used the division in this role. The brigade commander, leading a purely tactical unit, would be able to remain forward and leapfrog regiments as necessary, given his ability to respond to the battlefield situation quickly.[9]

The square divisional brigade was almost purely a tactical unit, with no logistical or administrative functions. While commanded by a brigadier general, its staff was small, consisting of three aides, a brigade adjutant, and 18 enlisted men who provided mess, communications, and transportation support. Assigned directly to the brigade were two infantry regiments, a small ordnance detachment, and a machine gun battalion. Each infantry regiment consisted of a headquarters company, a machine gun company, medical section, and three infantry battalions, each consisting of four rifle companies.

Public law complicated the concept of employment of machine guns. The National Defense Act of 1916 restricted the size of the infantry regiment. While the Army wanted one machine gun company for each rifle battalion, to place the three required companies under the regiment

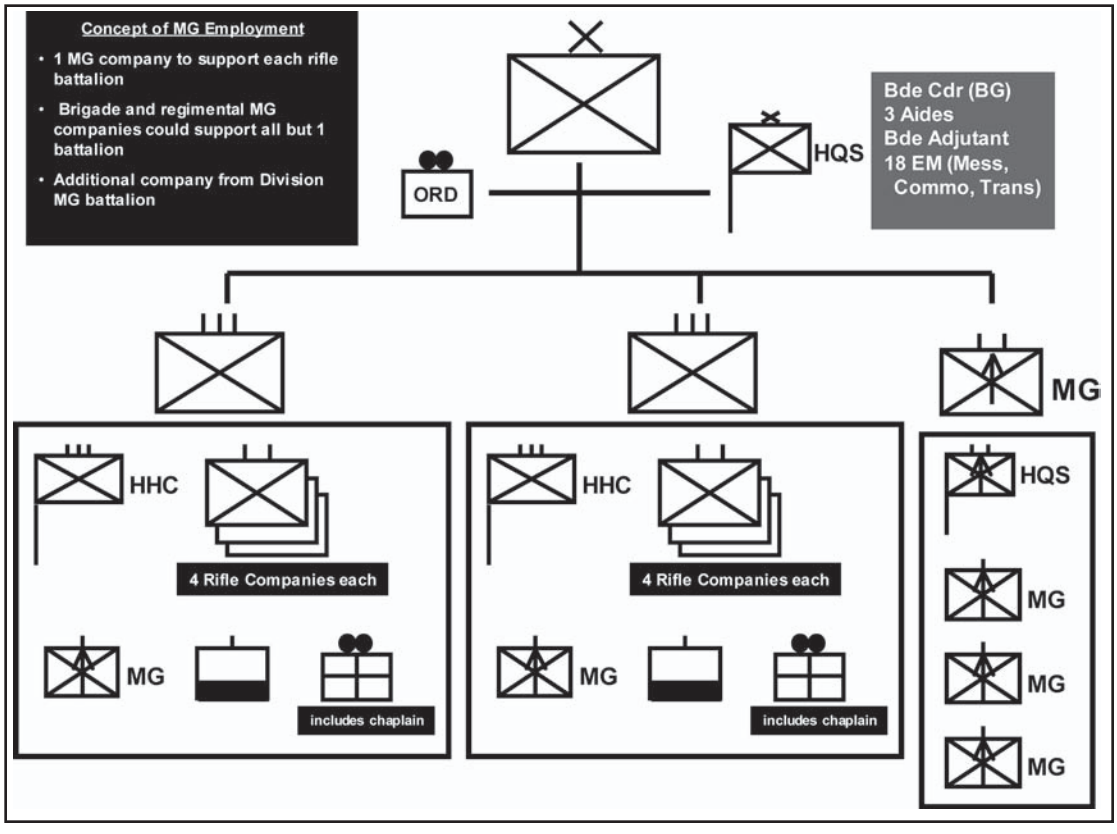


Figure 9. The Square Divisional Brigade, 1917

would mean a loss of two rifle companies. To get around this restriction, each brigade had a three-company machine gun battalion. When reorganizing for combat, the brigade could provide a supporting machine gun company to each battalion except one. To make up for this, the division also had a machine gun battalion of three companies, which habitually provided the extra company. In 1918, the organization was tweaked to give the brigade the additional company directly.[10]

For service in World War I, the Army raised 112 infantry brigades, all assigned or projected to be assigned to divisions. The mobilization of 1917-1918 saw the Army divided into three components: the Regular Army, the mobilized National Guard, and the National Army. The National Army, filled with draftees, replaced the former Volunteer Army used in the Civil and Spanish-American Wars. While the new unit designation scheme adopted by the Army in 1917 reflected the three-component distinction, it was later blurred. Divisions were numbered consecutively by component, with numbers 1-25 reserved for the Regular Army, numbers 26-42 reserved for the National Guard, and numbers 76 and higher reserved for the National Army. Brigades were numbered consecutively, but their numbers reflected their component. For example, the 1st Division had the 1st and 2d Brigades, the 2d Division the 3d and 4th, and the first National Guard division, the 26th, had the 51st and 52d Brigades. Regular Army brigades included the 1st through 40th; brigades above the number 40 were never organized. National Guard brigades included the 51st through 84th and the 185th. The National Army

brigades were the 151st through 184th, 186th, 192d, and 194th.[11] Machine gun battalions were numbered sequentially within each component using the numbering system used by regiments: the Regular Army had numbers 1 to 100, the National Guard 101 to 300, and the National Army 301 and higher. For example, the 26th Division's divisional machine gun battalion was numbered 101st, the 51st Brigade's 102d, and 52d Brigade's 103d.

Of the 112 infantry brigades raised for the war, 88 deployed to Europe: 58 brigades saw combat, 14 were converted to depot units in France, four were skeletonized, 10 were stripped of personnel to provide replacements and two arrived after the fighting ended. The wartime buildup lasted 18 months and was immediately halted upon the signing of the armistice on 11 November 1918.[12] A listing of the wartime, and postwar, brigades can be found in Appendix 3.

With the large number of draftees coming into the Army in 1917, a specialized brigade was established, the depot brigade. These brigades, organized for each National Guard and National Army division, processed new draftees and provided basic training. Each depot brigade had from two to seven training battalions, though some were organized with one or two training regiments as well. These units were eventually removed from divisions and placed directly under cantonment commanders.[13]

The brigade of the square division, with its 8,000 assigned personnel, was the largest brigade ever fielded by the US Army and, in 1918, was as large as the average French or British division. Accordingly, whenever US forces were placed under Allied command, it was common for the French or British commander to ignore US doctrine and place the division in a corps sector by itself and deploy the four regiments with three in the trenches and one in reserve or with both brigades abreast.[14]

Tank Brigades

Technical innovations created a whole new maneuver arm during World War I: the Tank Corps.[15] Tanks, though thought of at the time as primarily infantry support weapons, were organized into their own battalions and brigades as a separate branch of the Army. Tanks were considered an army or corps asset. The Tank Corps developed in two separate branches, the Tank Corps, American Expeditionary Force (AEF), in France, and the Tank Corps, National Army, in the United States. The AEF formed four tank brigades, initially called the 1st through 4th Provisional Tank Brigades, in August and October 1918. In November these brigades were redesignated as the 304th through 307th Tank Brigades. A shortage of tanks severely restricted their employment in 1918. The 2d and 4th Brigades were still forming when the war ended.[16]

Initially, tank support was conducted only at the battalion or lower level. Separate tank battalions supported one or two divisions. Each battalion was a self-contained unit designed to support a division or brigade in an assault. But later two tank brigades did see combat, the 1st/304th and the 3d/306th, commanded respectively by Lieutenant Colonel George S. Patton, Jr., and Lieutenant Colonel Daniel D. Pullen. While the AEF had formed five heavy and 10 light tank battalions, most of these were used as army- or corps-level assets. Patton's brigade consisted only of two light tank battalions, two repair and salvage companies, and a motor maintenance detachment (see Figure 10). Pullen's command served primarily as a liaison detachment with supporting French tanks and also as a command headquarters for some French tank units supporting the Americans.[17]

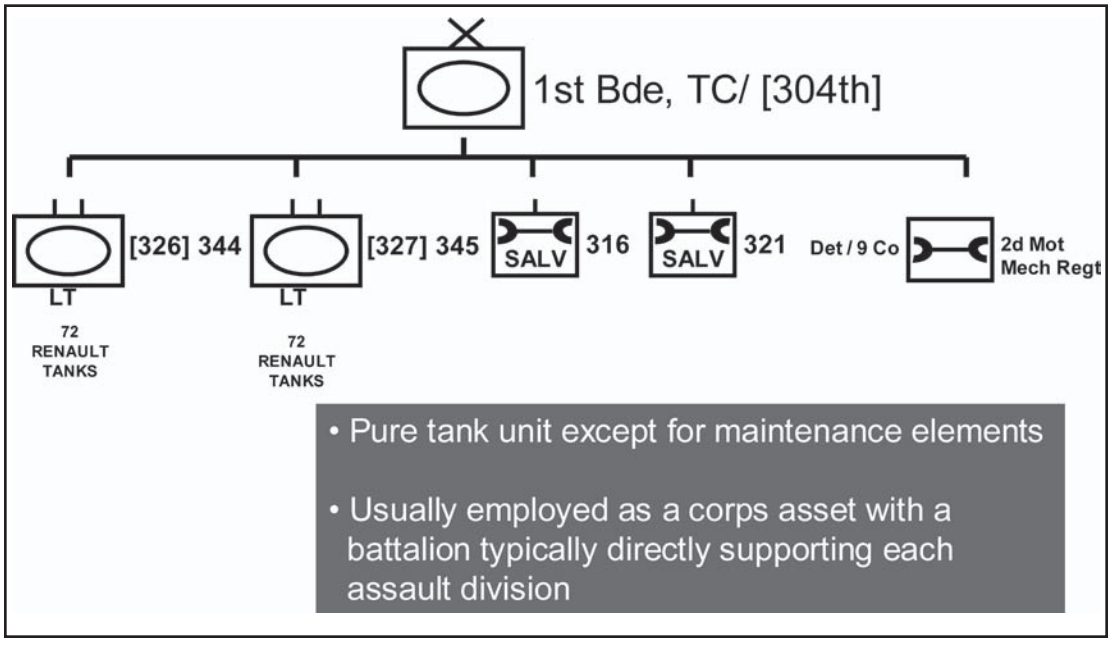


Figure 10. World War I Tank Brigade

Patton's brigade, with an attached group—roughly equivalent in size to an American battalion—of French tanks, participated in the Saint Mihiel offensive in September 1918. The brigade supported the 1st and 42d Divisions, with a battalion supporting each division.

Both brigades participated in the subsequent Meuse-Argonne offensive that started in late September 1918 and continued right up to the 11 November armistice. For this operation, Patton's brigade was assigned to support the 35th Division, I Corps. Because of terrain and maintenance considerations, Patton deployed the brigade differently than at Saint Mihiel, leading with one battalion supporting the infantry and his second battalion following a mile to the rear. The brigade initially supported the 35th Division from 26 to 30 September 1918, before being withdrawn for refitting. Two days later, the 35th was withdrawn after suffering almost 8,000 casualties in the four-mile advance that opened the offensive. Patton was wounded early on the first day of the offensive, but the brigade he had trained fought well under his replacement, Major Sereno Brett. The brigade returned to the line for short periods throughout the rest of offensive, supporting the I and V Corps. Pullen's brigade, after initially serving as a liaison headquarters for the French tanks supporting the II and V Corps between 26 September and 10 October, was reorganized with two light tank battalions. It replaced Brett's brigade in early November, but did not participate in any action before the war ended. The tank brigades, though sometimes employed as complete brigades, were pure tank formations in World War I whose focus was on supporting the maneuver of the infantry, rather than maneuvering on their own.[18] After the war, the Tank Corps was disbanded and tanks became a purely infantry support weapon, without an independent role.

The 154th Infantry Brigade in the Argonne

The 77th Division, consisting of the 153d and 154th Infantry Brigades, served as the left flank division of the I Corps, part of the American First Army, at the start of the Meuse-Argonne

offensive. By Wednesday, 2 October 1918, the division had been attacking for seven days in sector as part of the I Corps. Fighting in the Argonne Forest's rugged terrain, the division had initially, through tactical surprise, pushed the Germans back almost 4 miles, ejecting them from their first defensive line. The Germans were now in their second defensive line.

On 2 October 1918, the 77th was ordered to conduct a general assault and take the second German defensive line in a sector facing north, which had the 28th Division on the right and the French Fourth Army on the left. The day's objective, an advance of roughly 2,000 meters, was to high ground on which was the line of an east-west road and a railroad that paralleled it to the north. This was to be a repeat of an unsuccessful attack executed the previous day.

The 154th Infantry Brigade, the subject of this case study, was composed of the 307th and 308th Infantry Regiments and the 306th Machine Gun Battalion. While the division had been recruited as a National Army unit from the New York City area, attrition and replacements had complicated the complexion of the unit. For example, Company K, 307th Infantry, had been redesignated from the former Company L, 160th Infantry, California National Guard. The company had belonged to the 40th Division, which had been converted into a depot division in August 1918. The brigade had been in the line with only a few breaks since August, participating in the Oisne-Aisne operation where it was on the right flank during the German retreat to the Aisne, suffering heavy casualties. The unit was trucked from the Aisne front directly to the Argonne and attacked almost immediately. Due to attrition from these previous battles, some battalions were commanded by captains and one regiment, the 307th, was commanded by a lieutenant colonel. On the eve of the attack, the brigade received about 1,500 replacements from the 41st Division, which had been converted into the depot division for the I Corps. The replacements had been rushed to join the unit before their training was complete.[19]

The division commander, Major General Robert Alexander, directed the 154th Infantry Brigade's commander, Brigadier General Evan M. Johnson, to continue attacking in sector on 2 October northward against the entrenched Germans. Alexander directed Johnson to advance vigorously in disregard of the units on his flanks. The Germans were felt to be withdrawing and the units on the flanks, elements of the French Fourth Army's XXXVIII Corps, and the 28th Division, were expected to also be advancing vigorously.[20]

The terrain was the harsh easternmost portion of the Argonne Forest. The first German defensive line had been taken in the previous days. Despite that, the defense was still solid. The Germans had held positions in the Argonne since 1914 and part of the Battle of Verdun had been fought in the forest's eastern side in 1916. The German defenders in the western half of the brigade sector were seasoned veterans of the I Reserve Corps, Third Army. The 254th Reserve Infantry Regiment, 76th Reserve Division, held the line itself. The boundary between the I Reserve Corps and the easterly 2d *Württemberger Landwehr* Division ran along a ravine in the left portion of the 154th Brigade's sector. This boundary was not just between two divisions; it was also the boundary between the German Third and Fifth Armies. The 122d Infantry Regiment, 2d *Landwehr* Division, considered the weakest category of German unit by US intelligence, held the line in the west half of the brigade sector.[21]

The terrain in the brigade sector was thickly forested with high ground to the north cut by the lower reaches of the Charlevaux stream. The thickness of the foliage made the maneuver

of units difficult and hindered the adjusting of supporting artillery fire.

In the left portion of the brigade sector, the prominent feature was the ravine, the German army boundary. This ravine, an outshoot from the stream, ran roughly southwest to northeast from the brigade front line to the German rear area near the high ground that was the day's American objective. Though the German first defensive line had been taken in earlier attacks, the German defense was an in-depth defense, with their second line now reached, consisting of well-placed trench lines and machine gun positions, but the ravine was a natural weak point in the defensive position. While it was covered by fire and trenches at its southern end, the extensive barbed wire obstacles, usually found in front of the German trenches, were lacking here. This oversight was a consequence of the ravine being the boundary between two large units, where coordination between the forces on each side was harder than normal. A determined unit could surprise the defenders on each side in the first line. Once past that line, the ravine provided a covered, natural corridor into the rear of the German position.

The 154th Infantry Brigade led the assault with two regiments attacking side by side in sectors roughly 2,000 meters wide, the 308th on the left (west), 307th on the right (east). Each regiment led with one battalion, followed closely by a second battalion in support. The third battalion of each regiment was in reserve, the 3d Battalion, 308th (3/308), serving as the brigade reserve and the 1st Battalion, 307th (1/307), serving as the division reserve. Each regimental machine gun company was parceled out to the assault and support battalions by platoons. Additionally, each assault and support battalion had machine gun platoons from the 306th Machine Gun Battalion attached to them.

The 2 October morning attack failed. Johnson called the division commander and received firm instructions to try again. Johnson now clearly felt his job was on the line and directed his subordinate regimental commanders to attack after noon without worrying about what the units to the left and right were doing.

The assault battalion of the 308th, 1/308th, commanded by Major Charles Whittlesley attacked with three of its companies on line. The fourth company was covering the battalion's left flank where the French were supposed to be advancing. The support battalion, the 2d, under Captain George McMurtry, followed closely behind with three companies, one company also covering the left flank. Whittlesley was a determined commander and the two battalions found the gap in the German wire at the ravine and capitalized on it, quickly advancing almost 1,000 meters to the high ground just south of the day's objective. In the advance, the Americans captured two German officers, 28 enlisted men, and three machine guns, while receiving about 90 casualties from machine gun fire. Whittlesley set up a perimeter defense for the night and maintained contact along the ravine with the rear area by setting up a series of runner posts. The brigade reserve battalion had the responsibility to bring forward supplies along the line of these posts.[22]

Unfortunately for Whittlesley, the units on both of his flanks were stopped cold by the combination of German machine guns, mortars, and wire obstacles. The 307th Infantry, on the right, was stopped in front of the German defensive line, except for a little progress on the right, which was negated by the lack of progress of the 153d Brigade to the east. On the left, the French forces were retreating slightly rather than advancing.

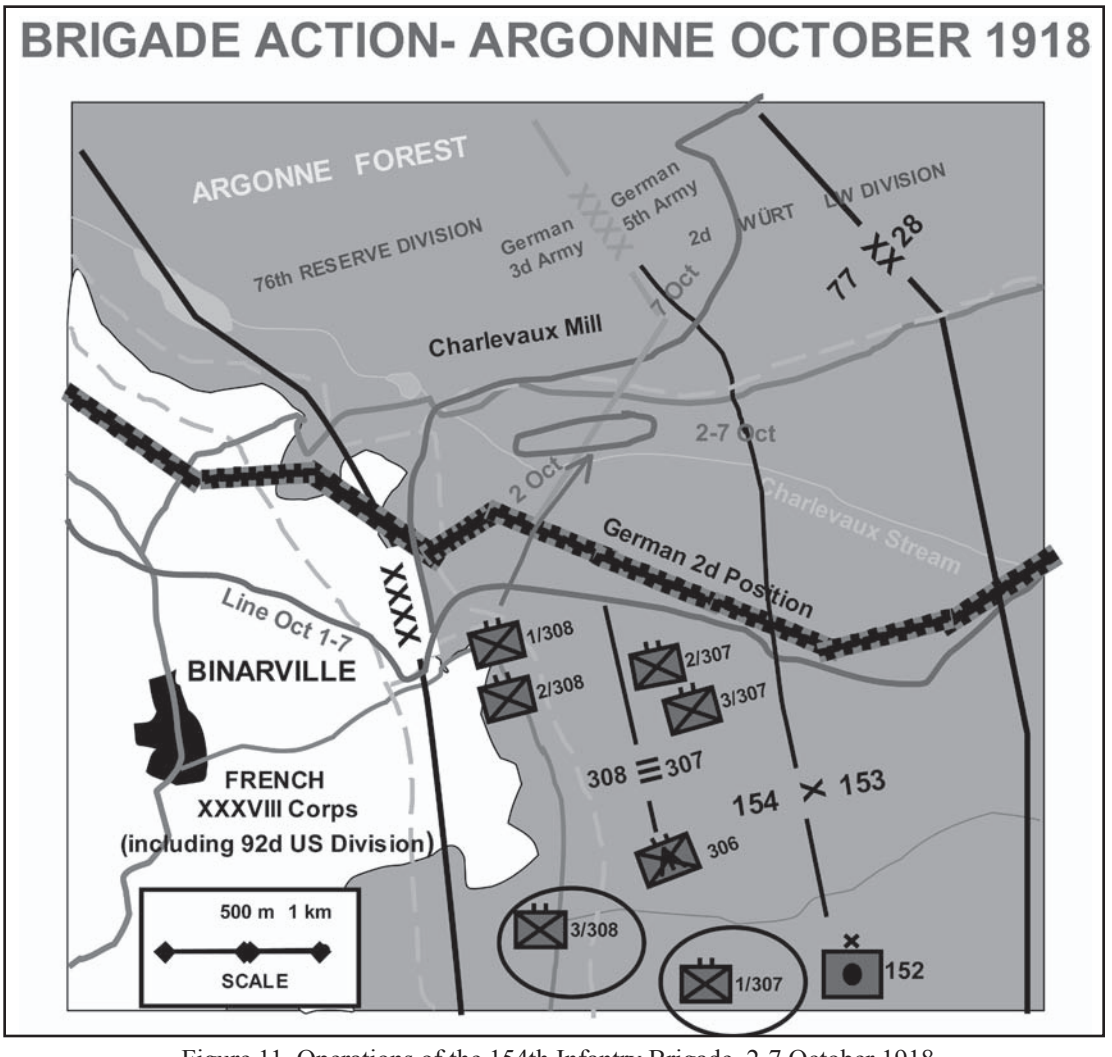


Figure 11. Operations of the 154th Infantry Brigade, 2-7 October 1918

Johnson relocated his command post to the rear of his two regiments and used runners to communicate with his subordinate regimental commanders. Near the end of the afternoon after receiving news of the 308th's success from Colonel Cromwell Stacey, commander, 308th Infantry, Johnson, realizing both the precarious position of the units with Whittlesley and the opportunity the gap in the German lines gave him, directed Lieutenant Colonel Eugene Houghton, commander, 307th Infantry, to send a battalion from his regiment to hold open the gap. Houghton immediately set his 3d Battalion in motion to comply with the orders. In the darkness the lead company, Company K, led by Captain Nelson Holderman, managed to get through, but follow-on units were stopped cold by the now alerted Germans.

The Germans responded to the apparent breakthrough swiftly. The breakthrough in the sector of the 254th Regiment, 76th Reserve Division, cut communications with the units of the German Fifth Army on the other side of it and threatened the whole German defensive position.

The 76th's front extended across the French sector, with only its left (eastern) flank opposite the US 154th Brigade's sector. The Ia, or the 76th's Operations Officer, Captain von Sybel, directed that the divisional engineer battalion, the 376th, several detached engineer companies, and the 76th and 77th, be sent to restore the main defensive line even though it was after dark. Major Hünicken, commander, 254th Reserve Regiment, would oversee this operation. Coordination at the corps level assured that elements on the other side of the army boundary would support the counterattack. During the night, the Germans moved in along the ravine between the American forward position and their own main line. In the process, they knocked out the string of runner posts Whittlesley had established and prevented all but K Company, 3d Battalion, 307th US Infantry from getting through the gap.

Before dawn, patrols from the German 254th Reserve Infantry Regiment infiltrated and cut the line of runner posts, killing two runners, capturing another, and driving the rest off. As dawn came, a solid German defense formed both on the main line and around the now isolated elements of the 308th Infantry. In some cases, the Germans posted alternate machine gun nests facing north and south.[23] Contact was restored between the 254th Reserve Infantry Regiment and the 122d *Landwehr* Regiment, providing a continuous defensive line once more. Though they would not know it until daylight, a force of seven companies was surrounded about 1,000 meters behind the German main defensive line. This detachment became known popularly as the "Lost Battalion," even though its location was always evident, to both Americans and Germans alike, and it was almost the size of two battalions.[24]

Despite the successful isolation of the American detachment, the Germans quickly discovered how large the American force was and how weak were their own forces in the area. The Allied offensive had stretched them thin in the western Argonne and reduced most units to a third of their authorized strength. Through a reshuffling of units, the 254th Reserve Regiment was given responsibility solely for the front facing the US 154th Brigade and around the Lost Battalion and the German 76th Division dispatched its reserve, a battalion of the 254th Regiment, to take care of the pocket.[25]

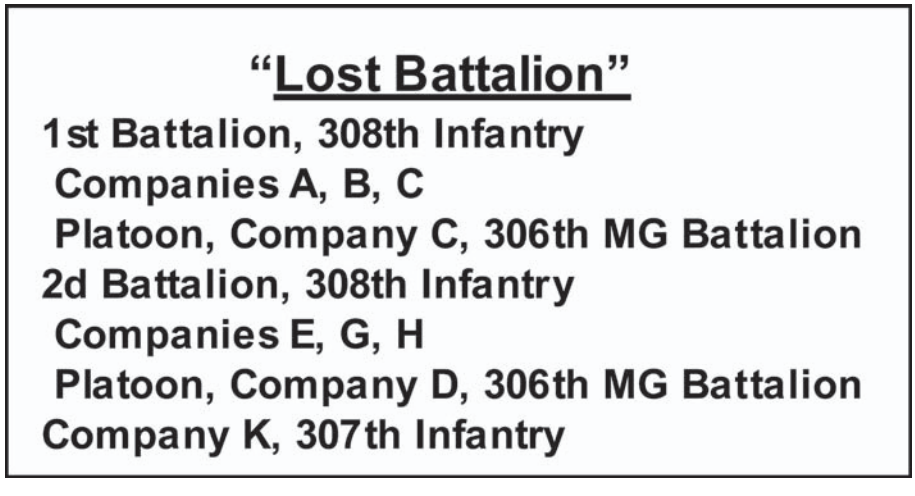


Figure 12. Units Isolated as the "Lost Battalion," 2-7 October 1918

Notwithstanding personnel shortages, the advantages of the thickly wooded terrain, and a prepared defensive line fortified the defense. Between 3 and 7 October, the Germans would successfully drive off seven attacks designed to free the Lost Battalion and advance the 77th Division's line forward.

Whittesley made the first of these attacks himself. Upon discovering his isolation in the morning, Whittesley dispatched Holderman and his company to reestablish contact with the rest of the brigade. The same German security patrols that had picked off the runner posts discovered Holderman's advance and promptly set up an ambush, which forced Holderman back into the perimeter. Soon the Germans had strung wire and posted machine guns and snipers solidly around Whittesley's perimeter.[264]

Between 3 and 7 October 1918, the 154th Infantry Brigade made the remaining six unsuccessful attempts to relieve Whittlesley and advance the line to the objectives of 2 October. These attempts were all beaten back by the Germans. The brigade reserve, 3/308th, a battalion weakened in previous days of battle, was committed to cover the brigade's left flank along with elements of the brigade machine gun battalion, while Stacey, 308th, led the first three attacks on the 3d and 4th. In the afternoon of the 4th, the 308th commander attacked for the last time with three companies of his own regiment and the division reserve battalion, 1/307th. This attempt to outflank the German positions on the right was defeated by thick underbrush and well-prepared defenders. The brigade and division commanders saw something lacking in Stacey, who lost his command that night on directive from Alexander, after he requested relief based on exhaustion and frayed nerves.[27]

The brigade commander, Johnson, personally led the attack on the afternoon of the 5th. The 307th Infantry had spent the previous few days trying to crack the nut that was the German defensive positions in front of their line. Despite their reputed poor quality, the 2d *Landwehr* Division's soldiers held off every 307th effort to push them back. For his attack, Johnson used the division reserve battalion, now down to 250 men, and the 2/307th, commanded by First Lieutenant Weston Jenkins, an attacking force of four companies. Three companies held the brigade's line. Each company was about 55 men strong, but many of Jenkins' men were raw replacements. Johnson's effort failed too, despite his vigorous leadership. The attacks failed through a combination of rugged terrain, a lack of artillery support due to inability to adjust fires, and the close proximity of the enemy lines to the American line.[28]

Throughout all these efforts, Whittlesley resolutely held on in his pocket, sending messages back by carrier pigeon. Attempts to resupply him by air failed when the drops fell into German lines and the plane was shot down. The men had started out with two days rations, which were stretched to five days. The Germans vigorously shelled the pocket and attacked the perimeter with grenades, finally demanding Whittesley's surrender on the afternoon of 7 October, a demand he refused.[29]

And rightfully so as the German demand was mostly a bluff: the Lost Battalion's ordeal was almost over, though the Germans tried one last, vigorous grenade attack before withdrawing themselves. Earlier in the day at the main line, a crack had appeared in the German defenses on the 154th Brigade's right flank, where the wire obstacles had not been maintained. Both the 154th and the adjacent 153d Brigade advanced into the opening and took up positions

where their fire outflanked the German main line. The Germans began withdrawing. The Lost Battalion was relieved by dusk. The original force of 554 was reduced to 194 soldiers capable of walking unaided off the hill they had defended against all comers.[30]

Part of the reason for the German withdrawal was the advance of another American brigade to the east. To ease the pressure on the Lost Battalion, US forces were shuffled to provide fresh troops to attack and outflank the Germans defending in the western Argonne. One of these units, the 164th Infantry Brigade, consisting of the 82d Division's 327th and 328th Infantry and 321st Machine Gun Battalion attacked to the northwest commencing on 6 October 1918. The early success of this attack into the flank of the 2d *Landwehr* and 45th Divisions resulted in a German withdrawal.

As part of this attack, Corporal Alvin York, Company G, 328th Infantry, executed one of the most famous acts of individual heroism in US military history when he single-handedly captured almost an entire battalion of Germans on 8 October, earning the Medal of Honor.[31]

For their part, members of the Lost Battalion also received several Medals of Honor: Whittesley, commander, 1/308; McMurtry, commander, 2/308; and Holderman, commander, K/307th. Additionally, the second highest Army award, the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) was awarded to 28 members of the Battalion. In the direct attempts to relieve the battalion, three additional Medals of Honor and five DSCs were awarded.[32]

As for the 154th Infantry Brigade, it continued with the offensive and ended the war on 11 November 1918 far beyond the Argonne on the heights overlooking the Meuse River south of Sedan, France. Johnson commanded the brigade until 30 October 1918, when his health failed, necessitating an operation. He had been the brigade's original commander and died shortly after the war.[33]

As can be seen from this case study, the brigade in World War I was a fairly inflexible fixed organization designed to provide continuous combat power to the front in the form of ample reserves ready to continue forward momentum after casualties or terrain had slowed up the initial attackers. A brigade with six infantry battalions would often advance with only two forward battalions, the rest in reserve to either continue the advance or be shifted to a discovered weakness in the enemy defenses. Though the Army maintained a continuous front as in previous wars, in this new war, a brigade did not necessarily attack with soldiers shoulder to shoulder. Consequently, for the first time, a brigade commander had to rely on various command and control means rather than personal contact to control subordinate units. No longer was a whole brigade visible to its commander. Unfortunately, means of communication had not kept up with tactical innovation. The inadequacy of the use of couriers, carrier pigeons, and landline telephones on the tactical battlefield resulted in the uncoordination of brigade offensive operations and the subsequent surrounding of a major portion of the command. Such coordination problems were apparent in earlier wars at higher levels, but now also appeared at the brigade level.

NOTES

1. John B. Wilson, *Maneuver and Firepower: The Evolution of Divisions and Separate Brigades.* Army Lineage Series (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1998), 24-25.
2. Ibid., 27, 32.
3. Ibid., 32-34.
4. Ibid., 34-35.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 35-37.
7. Jonathan M. House, *Toward Combined Arms Warfare: A Survey of 20th-Century Tactics, Doctrine, and Organization.* Combat Studies Institute Research Survey Number 2 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1984), 39-42; Wilson, 48. The British division was three brigades, but the subordinate units to the brigade were battalion-sized, so the French and German divisions actually came to resemble the British one in terms of number of infantry battalions.
8. Historical Resources Branch, US Army Center of Military History (CMH), *The American Division in World War I*, undated document.
9. Glen R. Hawkins and James Jay Carafano, *Prelude to Army XXI: US Army Division Design Initiatives and Experiments 1917-1995* (Washington, DC: CMH, 1997), 5.; House, 42.
10. Virgil Ney, *Evolution of the US Army Infantry Battalion: 1939-1968* (Fort Belvoir, VA: US Army Combat Developments Command, 1968), 7-8; Wilson, 67.
11. As an exception, the 4th Brigade was actually a US Marine Corps organization attached to the Army. The 185th Brigade is numbered as a National Army brigade because it was composed of segregated Guard units assigned to one of the segregated National Army units. The missing higher numbered National Army brigades were being formed when the war ended.
12. Wilson, 73.
13. Wilson, 60; *Order of Battle of the United States Land Forces in the World War, Zone of the Interior: Directory of Troops*, Vol. 3, Art 3 (Washington, DC: CMH, 1988), 1277-308.
14. House, 42.
15. Corps here is used in the sense of an administrative organization and should not be confused with the large tactical unit, the corps, or more properly, the army corps.
16. Ibid., 1543. James Sawicki, *Tank Battalions of the US Army* (Dumfries, VA; Wyvern, 1983), 4-6.
17. Dale E. Wilson, *Treat 'Em Rough: The Birth of American Armor 1917-20* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1989), 96.
18. Ibid., 163, 181.
19. *Order of Battle, AEF*, Volume 2, 259, 301-3; *Report of the Assistant Inspector General*, First Army, Subject: 77th Division, cutting off of seven companies and one machine gun company, 3 October 1918, dated 8 October 1918, found in the papers of Major H.A. Drum, *Papers Relating to Lost Battalion, 77th Division,* Document 12, Military History Institute, 25 March 2003, <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/cgi-bin/usamhi/DL/showdoc.pl?docnum =12>,(hereafter referred to as Drum Papers). The 77th Division had served in the trenches in Lorraine in July and August 1918 and participated in the Aisne-Marne Offensive in September right before moving to the Argonne.
20. *Report of the Assistant Inspector General,* Drum Papers. CMH, 1992, reprint of 1938), 176; Thomas M. Johnson and Fletcher Pratt, *The Lost Battalion* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1938), 27; David D. Lee, *Sergeant York: An American Hero* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1985), 33
22. *Report of the Assistant Inspector General,* Drum Papers; *Supplementary Report of Operations of the 308th Infantry Covering Period from October 2 to October 8, 1918*, Drum Papers.
23. Johnson and Pratt, 61.
24. Ibid., 41-44, 52-53.
25. Ibid., 43-44.
26. Ibid., 81-82, 86-88.
27. *Report of the Assistant Inspector General,* Drum Papers*; Supplementary Report of Operations of the 308th Infantry Covering Period from October 2 to October 8, 1918*, Drum Papers.
28. Ibid. *Extract from Report of Operations, 77th Division, Covering Period from November 1 to November 8, 1918*, Drum Papers.
29. Ibid.

30. Ibid. L. Wardlaw Miles, *History of the 308th Infantry*, "Chapter 7 The Lost Battalion." <http://longwood.k12.ny.us/history/upton.miles7.htm">, 24 Mar 2003.
31. York captured Germans from the 45th Reserve Division's 210th Reserve Infantry Regiment and the 2d *Landwehr* Division's 120th *Landwehr* Infantry Regiment. Lee, 33-38.
32. The relief medals were awarded to two airmen who died after their plane was shot down and to a first sergeant in the 307th Infantry who destroyed a machine gun nest on 4 October 1918. *The Lost Battalion of World War I*, <http://www.homestead.com/prosites-johnrcotter/lost_battalion_heroes.html>,, and, <http://www.homestead.com/prosites-johnrcotter/lost_battalion_heroes.html>, 28 March 2003
33. *Order of Battle*, 296; Johnson and Pratt, 290.